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NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 1977

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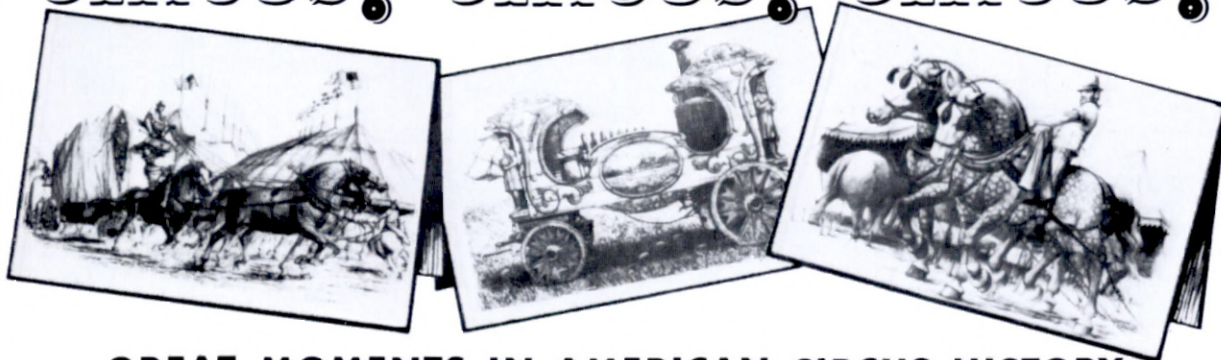
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EXCELLENT GIFTS AND COLLECTORS' MEMENTOS



Cole Bros. Circus

Season of 1943

by Joseph T. Bradbury

Work in the Louisville winter-quarters shops began earlier than usual and by January 1 some repairs on the rolling stock had already been done. Over one hundred working men, staff, and trainers were said to have been in quarters over the Christmas and New Year's holidays. Charlie Luckie was in charge of the carpenter shops while Curley Stewart headed the paint department when the work first began. The Terrells were visiting in Owensboro. Fred Seymour, superintendent, had been ill but was expected back sometime in January and would then take over overall responsibility for all of the various shops.

The *Billboard* mentioned several times that one of the major projects for the shops during the winter would be the building of a new general admission (red) ticket wagon to replace the 1938 Robbins Bros. wagon which had been in use since the Cole red wagon was lost in the February 1940 fire at the Rochester quarters. For some reason the new ticket wagon was never built, or at least not completed in time for the 1943 season. Perhaps the problem was in the difficulty of obtaining the required materials, or maybe it was decided to use the old vehicle another season. In any event the new general admission ticket wagon did not make its appearance until the 1944 season.

The trade publications indicated that several baggage wagons would be built, however in all probability these would only be rebuilds and as much of the material from the older wagon would be used as possible.

Unfortunately, Fred Seymour, took a turn for the worst and died on January 29. His was the first of several deaths of long time Cole people which would occur in 1943. Joe Belevokey, head seal

Photo No. 3 - Cole Bros. loaded flat cars at Harvey, Ill., Sun. July 4, 1943. Photo by H. A. Atwell (Pfening Collection).

trainer who had been with the show for a number of seasons, died a few days later of a heart attack.

To replace Seymour, Terrell hired William "Cap" Curtis to be general superintendent. Curtis was an experienced veteran having put in many seasons with the old American Circus Corporation and Ringling subsidiary shows. Actually, Curtis would serve primarily while the show was on the road. Charlie Luckie would handle carpenter and blacksmith shops in quarters and E. L. "Yellow" Burnett was hired to head up the paint department. Yellow Burnett also was a circus veteran of many years experience and often painted the Al G. Barnes Circus in the 30's.

The Jan. 30, 1943 *Billboard* said that work at the Cole quarters was forging ahead with all cages having been turned out of the repair shops and were now ready for the painters. All baggage wagons were scheduled to be repainted and several new ones were under construction. The K & I Railway shops have the contract to repair the railroad equipment with work to start February 1. Other notes said that material for new wardrobe is being purchased for the spec conceived by Harry Thomas and training of ballet girls begins February 15. The zoo is in charge of Ted White while Eugene Scott is away with the elephants on winter dates. Zoo attendance has increased steadily since Christmas with over 1000 in attendance, Sunday, January 17.

Victor Robbins, bandmaster of the Cole show since its initial season of 1935, went into the Navy shortly after the 1942 season closed and this meant that a major position had to be filled before the new season began. In early February Terrell hired Eddie

Woeckener to take over the band. He was well known in the circus world having in the past been bandleader of John Robinson, Hagenbeck-Wallace, Al G. Barnes, and Russell Bros. Woeckener started immediately to work on a musical score for the new spec. In the meantime no trainer had been hired to replace Joe Belevokey, but Ed Madison had been working the seal act at the zoo and various winter engagements.

The Feb. 13, 1943 *Billboard* gave the all important news that the Office of Defense Transportation (ODT) had given general approval for the Ringling-Barnum and Cole Bros trains to move in 1943 provided itineraries are approved in advance by the ODT and that railroad contracts stipulate that circus movements are subject to delay and interruption so as to give priority to all freight and passenger trains. The Big Show was encouraged (or required?) to reduce the number of it's cars to about 70, which it did mainly by dropping the menagerie top and many of the animals, however Cole Bros. was permitted to continue with 25 cars, 1 in advance and 24 back.

The Feb. 20, 1943 *Billboard* gave the first comprehensive account of Cole's plans for the new season. It said that the show would open April 21 on a new lot at the Louisville fairgrounds for a five day engagement. Due to the

Photo No. 1 - Front cover of 1943 Cole Bros. Magazine and Daily Review featured a large clown head drawing. Color scheme had the title in red trimmed in black on a yellow background. Clown was in red, white, blue, yellow, and black. Price was in white enclosed in a red circle. The show used this same design on the front cover of the programs from the 1941 through 1948 seasons. Joe Bradbury Collection.



former lot inside the grounds being taken over by the government for storage purposes, the show would break in a new lot just outside the main entrance. It was a large, grassy plot, formerly used for farming. It was a 10 acre spread and would be laid out with the midway facing Cecil Avenue, main throughfare to the grounds with streetcars and buses stopping in front. The state fair association will again sponsor the opening. Other notes said that J. D. Newman, general agent, was in Mexico City to preview an act which may be signed but no further information about it was given. Terrell said that the new spec title would be "The Conquest of Coronado" and would be staged by Harry Thomas with music by Eddie Woekener and special dances by Kevin Smith of the Courtney School of the Dance. New spec wardrobe is being created in quarters by Mesdames Harry McFarlan, Charlie Luckie, and Jack Bigger, using material obtained in New York and Chicago. Terrell said the spec theme would be the conquest of Francisco de Coronado in his search for the seven cities of Cibola (New Mexico). A final item said that Paul Nelson had designed a new format for the aerial ballet, using a new apparatus, instead of the customary swinging ladders.

The same *Billboard* carried the following advertisement, "WANTED for Cole Bros. Circus. Bill Posters and Billers. New agreement with Alliance has been made."

News was flowing freely each week from Louisville and the Feb. 27, 1943 *Billboard* mentioned that Paul Nelson was breaking the 12 Palamino horses which had been purchased during the western tour last year into a new act. John Smith was breaking a new black and white liberty act and also training new menage horses. Smith was also teaching last year's ballet girls to ride menage. Mahlon Campbell, who is working the sorrel liberty act, has broken a new pony drill. Again it was mentioned that quarters' work was well ahead of the 1942 pace with crews working in all departments. E. L. "Yellow" Burnett has turned out all of the cages from the paint shops and was starting on the baggage wagons.

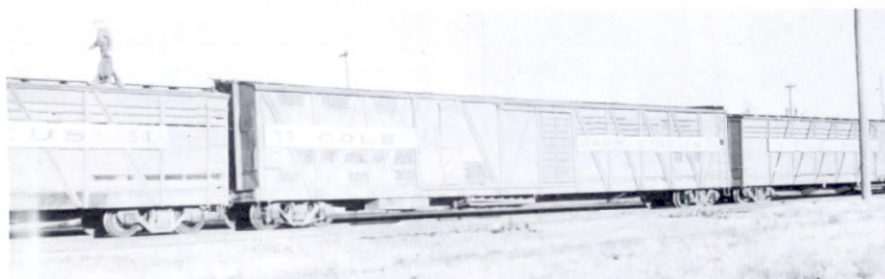
In early March Terrell signed Fuzz Plunkett as head seal trainer. Plunkett owned a number of seals himself

Photo No. 2 - Newspaper advertisement for Cole Bros. stand at Canton, Ohio, June 17, 1943. Pfening Collection.

which augmented those already on the show, making the largest seal act the show had seen in years to go on the road in 1943. Some thought was given to have acts going in all three rings worked by girls, but it appears only two groups were used with ponies appearing in the third ring. Also in early March the train was returned from the K & I shops to quarters, where Jack Bigger, along with Whitey Warren, put a crew to work repairing the interior of the coaches. The trade publications said that Yellow Burnett would work out a new color scheme for the train with streamlined lettering. Terrell made another major equine purchase by obtaining "My Highland View Peavine" from the P. K. Hubbard farms. Terrell, who grew up in the Kentucky blue grass region, dearly loved his horses and continually during the early 40's acquired an outstanding group of horses for his Cole Bros. Circus. Ringling-Barnum had him beat in total numbers of course but the quality of the Cole horses during the 40's was second to none. It must be realized however that the total number of horses carried by Cole didn't vary much during the years in the early 40's when it was on 25 cars as there just wasn't additional stock car space available. What happened was that the new horses which were generally of a higher quality were used to replace older stock which were sold.

As was customary during the winter months the show provided acts and animals for a number of indoor circuses. The March 13, 1943 *Billboard* said that Cole had sent a carload of elephants, liberty horses, ponies, and seals on March 12 to the Orrin Davenport dates at St. Paul, Minn. and Lansing, Mich. Eugene Scott was in charge of the elephants, John Smith, the horses, Jean Allen and Ed Madison, seals, while Harry Thomas would handle the announcing. Other show notes in this issue said that rehearsals for

Photo No. 4 - Cole Bros. elephant car No. 35 in center flanked by stock cars no's 34 and 36, season of 1943. Joe Bradbury Collection.



OWING TO TREMENDOUS DEMAND There Will Be 3 Performances Here In Canton---

AFTERNOON AT 3 P. M.

(Gates Open At 2 P. M.)

NIGHT AT 7 AND 9 P. M.

(Gates Open at 6 and 8 P. M.)

Tomorrow FAIRGROUNDS

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SHOW

COLE BROS. CIRCUS

ALL NEW
THIS YEAR

WITH THE MIGHTIEST
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THIS YEAR — GREATER, DIFFERENT
AN ECLIPSING EPOCH IN THE
**WORLD'S OUTSTANDING
AMUSEMENT INSTITUTION**

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| BOXING HORSES | THE 7 FLYING | THRILLING ANTELEKS |
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THE ORIGINAL **HANNEFORD FAMILY**
OF BAREBACK RIDING MARVELS — FEATURING
"POODLES"

BALLET of ELEPHANTS

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|---|---|
| Gigantic Railroad SHOW Gaily Colored BIG TOP 100% AIR COOLED | COUNTLESS FEATURES— 350 arenic stars—50 clowns —Big menagerie with ani- mals from all parts of the world—3 herds elephants— 250 horses and ponies— |
|---|---|

ballet girls would begin March 15 and for the big show, April 18, with the dress rehearsal for press and radio scheduled for April 20. J. D. Newman hired Jack Grimes as a member of the 1942 publicity staff. In 1942 Grimes had been press agent for Hennies Bros. Shows. (Carnival).

One of the unique features of the 1943 and succeeding wartime seasons was the tie-in the show had with the Treasury Department for the sale of War Bonds. The March 20, 1943 *Billboard* made the first announcement of the plan in which a certain number of seats would be set aside at each performance to be used by purchasers of war bonds in a locally promoted drive before each stand. The usual dress rehearsal would be passed up, instead the show would move the official opening up one day to April 20 and the initial evening performance would be attended exclusively by purchasers of war bonds. Newspapers, radio, and local merchants would be behind the drive to fill the big top that night with those who had purchased the bonds. On succeeding dates throughout the season the show would reserve one section of grandstand seats exclusively for bond purchasers. The bond promotion would start four weeks in advance of each date and not only would the publicity contribute greatly to the war effort but also would give the show a tremendous advance ballyhoo. A few weeks later the detailed plan for the Louisville opening was announced. Ticket sales would begin April 1 with the white ticket wagon at the disposal of the local bond committee. In the reserve seat sections the first row of seats would go to \$1000 purchasers, second row \$500, next three 100.00 and so on. For a \$25.00 bond you could sit in the blues. Later it was announced that the Treasury Department had worked out similar bond deals with Ringling Barnum and Mills Bros. circuses.

The April 10, 1943 *Billboard* said that Terrell had purchased two more five gaited stallions and two high jumping horses. Advance car No. 1 was ready to move, all wagons ready to roll, the paint crew was working on the train steadily, and the wardrobe department going at it day and night. The white ticket wagon was hauled to downtown Louisville by two elephants where it was parked to handle the selling of bonds for the opening performance. The same issue had the show's traditional call advertisement which read:

"CALL, CALL, CALL, Cole Bros. Circus. Rehearsals Start Fairgrounds Louisville, April 17th. Show opens April 20. All contracted performers and workmen please govern yourselves accordingly. Want Good Blacksmith and Horse Shoer to join at once."

With the show all ready for the 1943 season here is the way it looked. It would again move on 25 cars, which consisted of 1 advance, 4 stocks, 12 flats, and 8 coaches. The coaches were painted red with title in white (or silver) as before but a new color scheme was used for the flats, yellow with title in blue. Although I saw the 1943 show I cannot recall with certainty the color scheme of the stock cars. Neither can Gordon Potter. I believe the stock were the same color as the flats, yellow, with title in blue, but I am not positive. Photos indicate that was probably the color scheme. In 1945 the stocks were painted red, very easily recognizable in photos. In any event I feel sure the aluminum (silver) color of the stocks which was used in 1942 and prior years was gone. The advance car appears to have been painted red with

Photo No. 6 - Cole Bros. loaded flat cars, season of 1943. Train teams are ready to pull the wagons down the runs. Circus World Museum, Baraboo, Wis. Photo.



Photo No. 5 - Cole Bros. famous boxing horses, Easter Cloud and Easter Boy with their trainer, John Smith. This was one of the top acts in the 1943 performance. Circus World Museum, Baraboo, Wis., Photo.

lettering in white. The rather lengthy lettering used on the rail cars in 1942 was simplified into just "Cole Bros. Circus". Whether the new yellow color scheme of the flats can be attributed to Yellow Burnett or not I cannot say. Legend has long had it that the well known circus painter who was with a number of shows in the 20's, 30's, and 40's, would always put his favorite color on any circus equipment that he could.

Baggage wagons in 1943 were painted red with gears and wheels in yellow but the title was in white, a switch from yellow which had been used since 1940. Maybe Burnett was unable to prevent the switch to white for the title in this case.

The Mother Goose and Old Woman in Shoe pony floats, still on steel tired wheels were carried, and the Columbia tableau continued in use as the white (reserved seat) ticket wagon.

The elephant herd which began the 1943 season numbered 16 and included Tony, Big Babe, Carrie, Louie, Jean, Joe (male), Little Jenny, Nellie, Tessie, Wilma, Blanche, Big Jennie, Little Babe, Trilby, Kate (formerly named Baby Mine), and Pitt. History would later record this total of 16 would be the most elephants the Cole show would ever have again. Succeeding seasons would see fewer elephants in the herd.

Gordon Potter's notes contain some interesting facts about the 1943 Cole menagerie. He lists the following lead stock in addition to the elephants on the show that season, 5 camels, 5 zebras, 2 llamas, 2 hybrid zebra-mules; 2 water buffalo, 1 zebu, 1 bison, and 5 ponjurs. The show also had 10 head of



baggage stock. Ring stock numbered about 55 and ponies 18, same as carried in 1942.

There was one fewer cage than in 1942, the 14ft. cage that had originally come from Buchanan's Robbins Bros. not being carried. Potter lists the 10 cages on the show in 1943 as follows.

1. No. 8, monkeys, 12 ft.
2. No. 9, contents unknown, 12 ft.
3. No. 10, gnu, 15 ft.
4. No. 11, deer, 12 ft.
5. No. 12, deer, 12 ft.
6. No. 14, hippo, 21 ft.
7. No. 15, bears, 12 ft.
8. No. 16, chimpanzee, 12 ft.
9. No. 18, lions and tigers, 16 ft.
10. No. 19, seals, 16 ft.

Photos indicate the cage wagons were painted basically white with cover boards in darker colors.

The show took delivery on a new big top from O'Henry Tent and Awning Co. just before opening day. It was a 140 ft. round with three 50 ft. middles, and was made of blue canvas, same color as was the big top used during the 1941 and 1942 seasons. The canvas was a dark blue color and it's interesting how the various reviewers throughout the season described the particular shade. The menagerie top was a 70 ft. round with five 30's and sideshow 70 with three 30's. No mention was made in the trade publications of the show acquiring new tentage for the menagerie and sideshow, however the photo picturing all of the major tents on the lot in Los Angeles indicates both of these tops to have been in very good condition. They could have been new at the beginning or replaced during the season.

Potter's notes say that seating in the big top in 1943 had blues 14 rows high with grandstand chairs 12 rows high, 11 on stringers and one on the ground. Big top side poles were 9 ft. 8 in. high.

The show continued with 2 Caterpillar tractors and 4 Mack trucks for movement of wagons to, from, and on the lot.

Cole Bros. roster of staff and department heads at beginning of the 1943 season was as follows: Zack Terrell, President and general manager; J. D. Newman, general agent and traffic manager; Fred D. Schortemier, general counsel; Joe Haworth, legal adjuster; Robert Delochte, treasurer; Lorne M. Russell, auditor; Ora Parks, A. E. Waltrip, C. Foster Bill, Jack

Photo No. 10 - Large billing stand for Cole Bros. date at Jamestown, N.Y., Tues. June 15, 1943 advertising Shirley Byron (misspelled Barren) and the 16 horse Roman Standing hitch. Photo by William Koford (Al Conover Collection).

Grimes, and C. S. Primrose on press staff; W. H. (Cap) Curtis, general superintendent; Orville (Curley) Stewart, superintendent; Noyelles Burkhart, supt. of front door; Gene Weeks, supt. concessions; Charles Young, supt. canvas; Richard O. Scatterday, national advertising representative; Harry J. McFarlan, equestrian director; Paul Nelson, asst. equestrian director; Mitt Carl, supt. commissary; Louis Scott, supt. illumination; Pink Madison, supt. properties; Harry Thomas, director of performing personnel and announcer; Arthur Hoffman, supt. sideshow; Eugene Scott, supt. menagerie and

Photo No. 7 - Cole Bros. on the Hill and Washington streets lot, Los Angeles, Calif., Oct. 1-10, 1943. In left foreground is the menagerie and on right the sideshow. In rear is the big top with padroom behind it. The horse fair top which the show carried in 1941 and 1942 was eliminated this season. Circus World Museum, Baraboo, Wis. Photo.



elephants; Jack Bigger, trainmaster; Mahlon Campbell, supt. ring stock; Walter Rice, supt. of public address; and Eddie Woeckener, bandmaster.

The 1943 season, the second of World War II, had now arrived. Although tires, gasoline, canvas, and other materials essential for circus operation were scarcer and more difficult to obtain than a year ago, the confusion over acquiring them was gone. Everything was now completely regulated but at least the showowner knew where he stood and what to expect. There were shortages and red tape abounded, labor was scarce, and the problems were many, but also there was more money in the pockets of the natives than had been there in most anyone's lifetime, and the lure of this was too great for the showman. He was more than willing to put up with any and all of these difficulties in order to get a crack at this green stuff. The war news was much better than it had been at any time in the past. U.S. offensive action had begun during the latter part of 1942 in both the Pacific and North Africa. Morale of both armed forces and the civilian populace was high, much more so than at the corresponding time in 1942, although the war would be a personal tragedy to thousands of service men and their families. As the war progressed, more and more of the stars in the little flags hung in the front windows of servicemen's families back home changed from blue to gold, but it didn't turn the mood of the nation to morbidity. Each family bore its own personal cross as might be but the populace in general lived it up and were amusement hungry to the hilt. The bulk of the nation's armed forces were still in the states at least during the first half of the 1943 season and they too were



Photo No. 11 - Cole Bros. advertising car No. 1, season of 1943. Photo by William Koford (Al Conover Collection).

ready to take in any type of amusement, circuses included, which came their way.

The number of circuses going on the road in 1943 was considerably higher than the previous season. There were only two railroad shows, Ringling-Barnum on 70 cars, and Cole Bros. on 25. Motorized shows making regular under canvas moves included Clyde Beatty-Wallace Bros., Russell Bros., Mills Bros., Dailey Bros., Hunt's; Arthur Bros., Beers-Barnes; Al G. Kelly - Mills Bros. Jay Gould's, Lewis Bros. James M. Cole, M. L. Clarke & Son (operated by E. E. Coleman), Sello Bros., and Bud Anderson. Other under canvas shows playing extended or semi permanent stands were Holland Classical Circus operated by Bernard Van Leer and Gilbert Bros. Also for part of the season there was a Ringling owned permanent circus in Madison Square Garden titled "Spangles" which was managed by Charles Sparks.

In Mid April the *Billboard* said that Cole Bros. was all ready for its big war bond opening with the local committee reporting the sale would exceed the original quota set by it. Huge

streamers advertising the circus were strung across main streets from Broadway to Market and every department store on Fourth Street had a window display for the show. Advertising Car No. 1 left April 11 to bill the second stand of the season, Owensboro, Ky., with Verne Williams in charge.

The show's canvas went up on April 17. The town was well billed with colorful paper. The show used a number of special sheets which had been designed and used in the past including a victory theme poster. Date tails had the buy war bonds pitch on them.

The Show opened in Louisville on schedule and the May 1, 1943 *Billboard* told the story with headlines, "COLE BROS. BOWS TO BOND SELLOUT. New Big Top Packed in Cole Louisville. Specs and Acts with Added Emphasis on Horses. Score Solid Register." The article read in part as follows.

"Louisville, April 30 — 6500 shivering customers, who purchased 500 G's in War Bonds, witnessed the opening of Cole Bros. Circus performance, a sellout. A slight drizzle failed to dampen the response of spectators. The show under direction of Harry McFarlan ran two hours and 20 minutes. In the five day stand it is estimated 800 G's of War Bonds will be sold. . . (the performance itself was reviewed as follows).

The 1943 Program

"Opening with a colorful spec under the new royal blue, 10 ounce drill canvas, big top, first display was the 'Conquest of Coronado', gorgeous pagentry conceived by Harry Thomas. A spectacular equine ballet, participated in by members of the Coronados, followed the Conquest number.

"The Patterson Troupe scored with somersaulting and difficult acrobatics on the trampoline. Drawing all eyes to them in the center ring the Great Latinos gave an exhibition of seemingly impossible maneuvers on a tight wire. Walking with a basket on each foot, rope jumping on the wire and somersaulting thru a paper hoop brought the crowd to the edges of their seats.

"In spot No. 6 the clowns took over. The Harold Troupe, performers on the aerial bars, earned a good hand. Eugene Scott's dancing elephants worked by women trainers (Marion Knowlton, Jean Allen, Helen Scott) proved interesting. Another horse act, this time featured Gracie Hanneford in the center ring with Mickie Freeman, Jimmie Reiffenach, Corine Dearo, and Freddie Freeman. In the end rings was a good display of bareback riding which brought applause. Trained sea lions and a pony act scored. One of the best acts was Easter Boy and Easter Cloud, the boxing horses. Harry Thomas put on a typical vocal running of the match. Trainer John Smith acted as referee.

"Lovely fems attired in abbreviated sailor costumes performed on high swinging anchors in an aerial ballet. Featured were the Misses Partello, Dearo, Young, and Nelson. Act was climaxed by the Great Petroffs, Russian breath taking aerial stars.

"The pride of Zack Terrell was the presentation of Kentucky bred three and five gaited saddle horses. The Kentucky horse-loving audience spared no applause on this. Most impressive was the beautiful living art creations depicting paintings of the old masters. Portrayed were 'Columbus Discovers America', 'The Dove of Peace', and 'Victory'. Florence Tenyson scored as soloist in the number.

"Poodles Hanneford and family as usual were tops. This was Poodles second appearance here this spring, he having been here before with Polack Bros. At the end of the act, Mother Hanneford was presented with a large bouquet of red roses by Thomas as a gesture of good luck for the season.

"Cyse O'Dell brought a great round of applause as Thomas slowly called out the number of times she made one-arm planges over the center ring. A distinguished company of riding maids put the waltzing and high-jumping horses thru their paces. John Smith brought out his jitterbug horse which has enough rhythm to team up with any real rug cutter. This was

Photo No. 12 - Cole Bros. loaded flat cars, season of 1943. Pfening Collection.



especially well received by the younger members of the audience. The Great Antaleks, assisted by Virginia Tiffany and Bert Dearo, put on an aerial act that went over big.

"As can be concluded the show is well spotted with horse acts, the final being the liberty horses, handled by John Smith, Paul Nelson, and Mahlon Campbell. They have done a remarkable job of training, as not one flaw could be found in the act.

"The flying Thrillers, featuring Eileen Harrold in a double-twisting somersault while blindfolded, brought a great round of applause.

"A brilliantly costumed victory spec and the playing of the National Anthem closed the show and sent a cold but well pleased crowd home.

"In clown alley are Otto Griebing, Horace Laird, Alva Evans, Freddie Freeman, Arthur Borella, Bill Bailey, Albert Powell, D. M. Pearce, Karyl DeMott, Joe Franklin, Albert White, Ray Good, Lee Smith, Charles Robinson, Chester Wiley, Ray Wright, and Marylin Simmons.

"Arthur Hoffman, manager of the sideshow did not fare as well comparatively as the big top with crowds, but this was due mostly to weather conditions. Gene Weeks, supt. of concessions, reported business extremely good for an opening night.

"Eddie Woeckener is doing an outstanding job as bandmaster. His boys can really give out with circus music with anything from swing and jazz to the classics."

Although the reviewer didn't mention it the aftershow concert was in charge of Hank Linton, well known circus wild west personality. Featured were the standard trick riding, roping, and other wild west type numbers. A wrestling match highlighting Whitey Govro concluded the aftershow.

The reviewer likewise didn't mention the thrilling display of the 16 horse hitch and its daring Roman Standing rider which circled the hipodrome track and it's a possibility the act didn't work on opening day. Several different performers worked this act over a period of years and Shirley Byron was scheduled to begin the season as the rider, however sometime during the Louisville run, possibly during one of the rehearsals, she was injured and out of the program for a while. She later returned but evidently was replaced before the end of the season by Senor Roberto Bonin, who was listed as the rider in the official 1943 route book. Throughout the season there were an unusually large number of injuries to performers and few acts went through the season without at least one member getting hurt. Also there were several significant changes of acts or personalities working in an act during the season.

Clown numbers included the boxing



Photo No. 13 - Cole Bros. baggage wagon No. 40 ready to come down runs, season of 1943. Pfening Collection.

match between Otto Griebing and Freddie Fremean, a tradition in the Cole Bros. program for many seasons, and Otto Griebing's clown band.

The sideshow lineup was as follows: Rose Westlake, mentalist; Hoppie Winder, frog boy; Harris, magician; Duke Kamokula's Islanders; Danda Candola, African chief; Charles Roark, Punch and Judy and ventriloquist; Betty Broadbent, tattooed lady; Frank Coleman, armless man; Mynar Carsey, snakes; Ginger Benson, Sue Young, Beatrice Ludwig, and Kathleen Childress, Oriental dancers; Harry Lunceford's Minstrels; Joe Tracy and Charles Roark, lecturers.

The show played to about 40,000 during the five days in Louisville, April 21-25, and sold about 750,000 in War Bonds. Unfortunately, cold and rainy weather hounded the show during the entire run. The unfavorable weather was a forerunner of what would be experienced during the early weeks of the season and would again plague the show during the final days in the fall. All shows in the eastern and mid-western areas of the country took a real beating during the season from the weather and to this day many veteran troupers will proclaim that 1943 was the worst season, weather-wise, in modern circus history. Had the weather not been such an adverse factor certainly 1943 would have been the top season, financially, ever for Cole Bros. At some stands the take was never surpassed, before or since.

Leaving Louisville the show moved to Owensboro with the train arriving late and necessitating a 4:30 p.m. matinee, however two full houses were on hand during the stand. Going on to Evansville the next day the train arrived early but it was discovered that the contracted lot was two feet under water. Arrangements were then made with the American Legion to use an old lot outside the city limits. The show set up in a downpour of rain and mud was ankle deep on the lot. The matinee started at 5 p.m. with people seated on straw to the ring curbs and at night over 500 were unable to get into the big top. Moving into Terre Haute for an April 28 stand, a flat car carrying the big top canvas wagons and a tractor split a switch and turned its nose four feet into an embankment. The tractor overturned but the wagons remained on the car which was tilted at a 45 degree angle. The railroad sent a wrecker to right the car but there was a four hour delay which caused cancellation of the matinee. The night house was a turnaway with 1500 unable to gain admittance. The show arrived early in Indianapolis, April 29,

Photo No. 14 - Cole Bros. baggage wagon No. 65 being "polled" along flat cars to unloading runs, season of 1943. Pfening Collection.





Photo No. 8 - Cole Bros. used this one sheet flat litho in 1943 to advertise Gracie Hanneford's riding act. Color scheme had title in red on yellow band at top. In center is blond girl in rusty circle. Palamino horses are in natural hues, rider's skirts are gold, and overall background is blue. Circus World Museum, Baraboo, Wis. Photo.

for a four day stand, the first of several of that length the show would have during the 1943 season. Terrell and his advance staff felt the longer stands which would cut down on the number of railroad moves during the season would be profitable as the cities where they would be scheduled had an ample population made prosperous by the booming wartime economy.

Business in Indianapolis was termed by show officials to be far in excess of 1942 despite the cold and rainy weather that persisted. All matinees were better than half houses and every night was capacity. The engagement was marred by several accidents. At the opening matinee Gracie Hanneford's principal horse fell during the bareback act throwing her into a ring curb. She suffered two broken bones in her right foot and doctors said she would be out of the show for at least three months. Later in the program, Jean Allen's horse slipped in the same spot and she sustained a twisted shoulder muscle, but fortunately she was able to return to the performance at Anderson, Indiana, May 4. The Indianapolis stand was the longest of any circus in that city in many years and Cole received great publicity in the local press.

The next stand was at LaFayette, Ind., May 3, where there were two straw houses, with patrons sitting to the ring curbs and 1000 were reportedly turned away at night. Over 5400 kid tickets were sold for the matinee. A late arrival in Hamilton, Ohio, May 5, and the delayed matinee didn't seem to dampen the spirits of circus lovers as they came in large droves and the straw was again brought out at night.

A four day stand in Cincinnati began the following day with tents set up on

the Cummingsville lot. The *Billboard* sent a reporter to visit the show and his interesting commentary appeared in the May 15, 1943 issue. The article said Cole Bros. finally had some good weather at Cincy. The first matinee scheduled for 3 p.m. didn't get started until 3:30 with attendance light but the evening crowd was good. The reporter noted an air of freshness about the show, everything new from front to back, and he described the new big top from O'Henry as being indigo blue, 10 ounce Army drill, and "blackout proof". It has an American flag woven into the fabric running the full length of the top. (Author's note: from this description it appears the new top was essentially a carbon copy of the one used during the 1941 and 1942 seasons). The program ran smoothly. Conquest of Coronado was beautifully dressed and Florence Tennyson, soloist, scored with several selections. A total of 1600 free tickets (800 each performance) that day was placed at disposal of the War Bond Pier on Fountain Square for bond purchasers. Performers gave several entertainments to foster the bond sales. The performance features Latinos, elephant act, Cyse O'Dell, the Antelek's, liberty horses, and Flying Thrillers. Clown band is directed by Otto Griebing, and Wild West concert is headed by Hank Linton.

While in Cincy Terrell purchased several animals from the Cincinnati Zoo which included a male llama, Grant Zebra, and a one year old hippopotamus which had been raised in the zoo. They were shipped and joined the show at Middleton, Ohio, May 10. It is assumed the hippo, Chester, which Cole had leased from Ringling-Barnum and carried during the past three seasons, was shipped from Middleton to the Ringling owned quarters in Peru, Indiana. Chester was sent from Peru to Sarasota during the coming winter and would tour with Ringling-Barnum in 1944.

While the Cole advance was at work in Toledo, Ohio, James Bannelli, veteran trouper, joined as a contracting agent to give a hand to William J.



Photo No. 16 - Cole Bros. loaded flat cars, season of 1943. Photo by William Koford (Al Conover Collection).

Lester, who at the time was the sole agent for the show.

Cole played Springfield, Ohio, two days, May 11-12, then moved to Dayton for three days where the bad weather returned. First matinee was slim due partly to the heavy thundershowers which deluged the fairgrounds lot immediately preceding the opening. The show also observed that war industries workers in the town no longer patronized afternoon shows in any great numbers. Opening night saw a three-quarters house in cold weather with threatening rain. The second and third night houses were capacity. At the final matinee Ruth Nelson's horse balked at a barrier, throwing her over it's head. She was stunned but was able to go on at night.

After a Sunday date at Richmond, Ind., May 16, the show moved to Kokomo the next day where only a night performance was given, the lot being so wet and muddy it was impossible to set up in time for the matinee. The following day in Marion the show encountered the same wet and muddy conditions and again it was impossible to have an afternoon show. Torrential rains had now caused widespread flooding conditions in the area and the show was forced to cancel the scheduled stands at Ft. Wayne, May 19, and Lima, Ohio, May 20.

At Mansfield, Ohio, May 21, the Richland County fairgrounds lot which the show had planned to use was under water, but a new location was found and it was possible to set up even though the lot was damp and soft. Mansfield gave a straw matinee and a turnaway at night.

Cole next played two days in Akron. The train was late in arriving from Mansfield and the matinee didn't start until 5 p.m. but there was a good crowd on hand and the night show did capacity. Both matinee and night houses were capacity on the second day, in fact the show was even prepared to give a third show, but found it un-

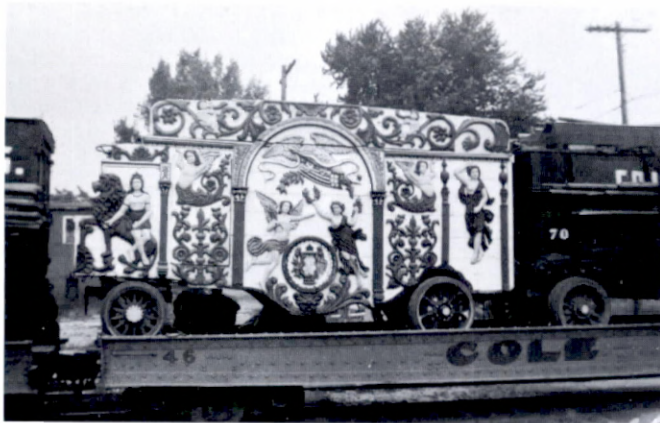


Photo No. 17 - Columbia tableau (reserve seat ticket wagon) on flat car No. 46, season of 1943. Photo by William Koford (Al Conover Collection).

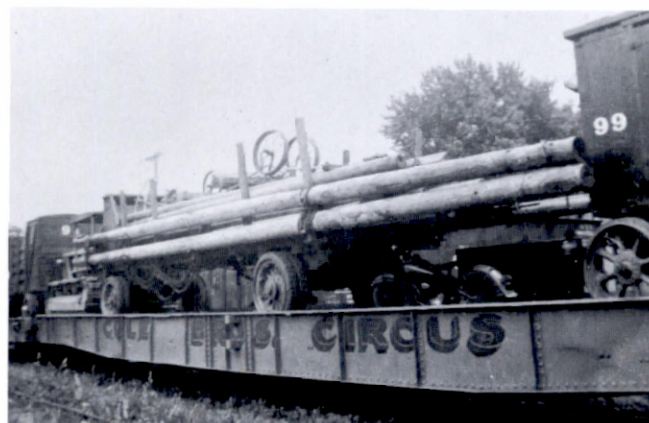


Photo No. 18 - Cole Bros. loaded flat cars, season of 1943. Note motorcycle with side car under rear portion of the big top pole wagon. Photo by William Koford (Al Conover Collection).

necessary when all customers were accommodated.

Leaving Ohio the show moved into Pennsylvania for a single day at Butler and was scheduled to play Wheeling, W. Va. the next day, May 25, but according to the season's route book the stand was cancelled. No reason was given but evidently it was due to flooding conditions which were fairly widespread throughout the region. Wheeling thus became the third full day to be completely lost to the weather. The show returned to Ohio at Athens, May 26, and was at Portsmouth the following day.

The May 29, 1943 *Billboard* in assessing the season so far said that outdoor showbusiness was soaring. Ringling-Barnum had a most successful record run of 37 days in Madison Square Garden. Cole Bros., the report said, had played from fair to turnaway business and was playing longer stands, many of them four dayers. The two rail show's plus Mills Bros. were participating in the war bond drives which were most successful. Russell Bros. on the West Coast was going good business, and Hunt, Clyde Beatty-Wallace Bros., and Arthur Bros. were all reporting fine takes.

The adverse weather had probably been the most costly to the Cole Bros. than any of the others. Business for the show had been so great at the stands where the weather was favorable there was ample reason to assume the same could have been had at all of the many missed performances.

Cole went into West Virginia for two days in Charleston, May 30-31 and claimed capacity business at all four performances. The ticket wagon was helped by the many war production workers in the nearby No. 1 synthetic rubber plant in the country and the giant chemical operations across the Kanawha River from the showgrounds. The sideshow drew large pre big top crowds and continued

fine business throughout the stay. For a change there was perfect weather except for a short drizzle just before the final performance. Other stands in the state were at Clarksburg, Fairmount, and Morgantown, and then the show entered Pennsylvania at Uniontown, June 4, for five stands in the Keystone State. Wilkes-Barre, June 8, turned out big for the show which played to 15,000 for the day. Weather was good and the war bond seats were filled at both shows. Dorothy Lewis joined to do cowgirl riding and roping in the aftershow, and Shirley Byron returned to work the 16 horse hitch after being out with injuries since Louisville. Arthur Hoffman had one of the best days with the sideshow so far at Wilkes-Barre. Scranton, the final date in Pennsylvania had two full houses despite rain, and then the show went into New York to play Binghamton, Elmira, and Batavia. The show returned to Pennsylvania for a single stand at Erie, June 14, where there was a 75 percent full matinee and capacity at night which brought out all the chairs and the crowd overflowed the ends of the grandstand. The matinee was on time in perfect weather. An observer that day said that the strict government campaign against all pleasure driving didn't seem to hurt the attendance as people drove to the show and also it was noted that everything seemed to be clicking in mid-season form. Marilyn Rich joined at Erie to do one-arm planges in the performance, replacing Cyse O'Dell. Gracie Hanneford had the cast removed from her foot which she injured in Indianapolis and hopefully would get back in the performance ahead of schedule. Arthur Hoffman told the press that sideshow business had been better so far than in 1942. Elephants participated in the local Flag Day parade.

In the interview with Noyelles Burkhart mentioned in the first installment in this series he was asked to comment on what it was like with Cole Bros. during the World War II years. He was with the show during all of war seasons, 1942, 43, 44, and 45, and his

interesting commentary was as follows.

"The war years were rough. There was a general shortage of help. There was hardly anyone on the lot to tag for help in the mornings. We had a bus and a candy butcher called 'John The Baptist' was sent downtown with the bus each morning to round up 15-20 working men. These people, plus kids who worked for tickets, and some of the performers who were paid to work, managed to get the show up. Girls on the show helped set up chairs.

"The circus train was often held up on sidings for the passage of troop trains. Although the show was late getting in (some mornings as late as 10 or 11), I don't recall that the show missed any dates on account of late arrivals due strictly to war time traffic. The cookhouse often made up sandwiches for the workers, kids etc. who got hungry on account of the show's late arrival which made them work past noon in getting it up.

"During the war years the show donated a section of big top seats to war bond purchasers.

"Material and equipment were very difficult to obtain. At one point trucks for the show's advance crews were needed. It so happened that Zack Terrell had met Charlie Wilson in Anderson, Indiana in the 1920's. Wilson, later to become Secretary of Defense, was then president of Delco-Remy, a supplier for General Motors. Anyway, when Terrell could not obtain the needed trucks he decided with some hesitancy to call Wilson, who was now president of General Motors. As a result he got five trucks within a week."

After Erie the show returned to New York to play Jamestown, June 15, then headed to Ohio with first stand coming at Youngstown, followed by Canton, Tiffin, and two days at Toledo. Visitors at Toledo said all four performances



Photo No. 19 - Cages on Cole Bros. lot at McCook, Neb., July 17, 1943. Photo by Joe Fleming.

saw excellent turnouts and it was noted the show was handicapped by a lack of help in all departments.

The show next went into Michigan with initial date at Flint, June 21, where three shows were given. Actually the third show had been pre-scheduled in anticipation of expected business by Ansel E. Waltrip, story man, after he arrived in town. This was the first time the show had tried the idea of scheduling three regular performances in face of its normal two show billing. Newspapers and radio were used to publicize it.

At the time the show visited Michigan the state had been plagued by a series of race riots in the Detroit area, the worst in the nation since 1919. The show lost the stand at Pontiac scheduled for June 21 because of the riots. The train arrived late in Pontiac but was not allowed to unload on orders of the National Guard. Martial law had earlier been declared by Michigan's governor and it was felt it best Cole Bros. not show in Pontiac because of the tense situation. It moved on to Port Huron where performances were scheduled for the next day. Additional Michigan stands came at Bay City, Saginaw, Lansing, Jackson, Grand Rapids, Muskegon, Kalamazoo and Battle Creek before the show headed on to Indiana for two days in South Bend, July 2-3, where business was very good.

Throughout the season Eddie Woeckener had difficulty in keeping a full complement of musicians on hand. The following advertisement appeared in the July 3, 1943 *Billboard*, "Musicians Wanted. Can place now. Sousaphone, trombone, 2 trumpets or cornets, bass drummer. Eddie Woeckener, Bandmaster, Cole Bros. Circus as per route."

Cole next moved into Illinois for stands at Harvey, Joliet, two days in Peoria, and Rock Island. The July 17, 1943 *Billboard* had an article with headlines, "Cole Biz Blows Hot, Cold

Around Chicago", and went on to say that Harvey, Ill., 20 miles south of Chicago, was the July 4 stand but folks just didn't turn out. Matinee was light and night house only half full. By contrast Joliet saw two good turnouts. Because of some difficulty the Harold Voise flying act and wire act failed to work at Joliet and the night show was over at 10 p.m. First day at Peoria, July 6, saw a light matinee and a heavy rain at 7 p.m. kept the night crowd short of capacity. On the second day there was a good matinee crowd and capacity at night.

The show next went into Iowa playing Des Moines, July 9-10, then moved rapidly on to Nebraska for two days in Omaha, July 12-13, which was then followed by single stands at Lincoln, Grand Island, Hastings, and McCook.

The July 24, 1943 *Billboard* had an interesting article about Cole's tour through this area which was headed, "Mid Season Biz Goes Up-Cole Turnouts in Three States Trot Out The Straw". Both shows at Lincoln, July 14, sold out before 11 a.m. The matinee was a straw and Terrell decided to give two night shows. The first saw every grandstand chair occupied and the second night performance also produced an excellent house. Rock Island, Ill. July 8, had a near capacity matinee followed by straw at night. The show played to about 20,000, July 12-13, at Omaha. Weather was ideal though a light rain hampered somewhat Tuesday night. First day matinee was fair with crowd on straw at night. Both shows second day were near capacity. Elaine Harrold sustained a broken shoulder when she fell during a leap and is expected to be out of the program for the rest of the season. "Midnight", jumping horse, fell going over a hurdle but was expected to be back within a week. The show got a new padroom top in Omaha from O'Henry Tent and Awning Co. which prompted Col. Harry Thomas to remark, "That's something these days of scarce canvas". In Des Moines the show paraded the elephant Baby Mine (now called Katie) around the hippodrome track. She had been purchas-

ed in Des Moines by the show a year ago.

Arthur Hoffman, sideshow manager, told the reporter that he had recently had some excellent draws and at present had ample help but opined that good acts were scarce. Thomas reported the show had more labor than a year ago but it was of lower calibre. There were four capacity houses in Des Moines, and Noyelles Burkhart, in charge of the show during the absence of Terrell, said he was pleased with the turnouts of late. A. E. Waltrip turned in a good job on publicity, getting spreads in both the local papers. Radio also used spot plugs. The run from Rock Island was made in good time but the 176 mile trip still delayed the starting time of the first matinee. The *Billboard* reporter said the show was doing a fine job selling war bonds and observed that despite the manpower shortage the show was moving on schedule with all personnel pitching in to make this possible. The railroads are doing a good job moving the show with a minimum of delays. Final observations said that the new *cobalt blue* big top was none the worse for the mud encountered early in the season and presents a striking setting for the spec, "The Conquest of Coronado".

CHS Joe Fleming of Trenton, Nebraska, a long time personal friend of the author, caught the show at McCook, Nebraska, July 17 and furnished several of the photos printed with this article. I asked Joe, a great lover of circus band and music and a fine authority on the subject, to comment on the Cole Bros. band he heard play at McCook that day. His interesting reply was as follows:

"Eddie Woeckener always had a

Photo No. 23 - Herbert and Chatta Webber, billed as Los Latinos, on Cole Bros. lot at McCook, Neb., July 17, 1943. Photo by Joe Fleming.



good band in the years he was leading the Cole Bros. band and in the war years he was hard pressed for men, but still it was always fine sounding, even though short handed at times. During the performance at McCook I was standing in the bandstand with my drummer friends, Billy Todd, Zenda Plunkett, and Col. Harry Thomas. This was a year when Woeckener was real short of men and Harry or Zenda were always there taking a turn between their various other duties and Billy stayed right in there slugging away. This was a rather unusual arrangement I believe. The drummers stood at the rear of the bandstand and thinking back upon the many years I have watched bands at a circus I believe that all other drummers were out ahead of the band and almost without exception the bass drummer always stood up to play. Eddie Woeckener was my friend and I was always welcome to make myself at home around his band. I sure missed the boat in not getting him to give me a list of the selections played, and for that matter I could have easily enough made my own list by kabitizing over the shoulders of some of the boys. Can't remember now but would be willing to bet my social security check that the drummers didn't have any music. I do remember that in 1943 the band played "On the Square" for the opening spec."

After McCook, Cole played Denver, Colorado July 19-22. the July 31, 1943 *Billboard* said that 75,000 had seen the show during the record four day run in Denver. Matinees had averaged two-thirds capacity while each evening's crowd was on the straw despite fact it rained during three of the nights. Biggest house came on Wednesday

Photo No. 25 - Poodles Hanneford, mother, and wife, on Cole Bros. lot at McCook, Neb., July 17, 1943. Photo by Joe Fleming.



Photo No. 20 - Eddie Woeckener (kneeling) and his big show band on Cole Bros. lot, McCook, Neb., July 17, 1943. Photo by Joe Fleming.

night in spite of a three hour down-pour. Opening spec was eliminated to prevent damage to the costumes and some track numbers were dropped because of the overflow crowd. The stand was a big homecoming as usual for the number of troupers who once lived there during the days Sells-Floto wintered in Denver. Terrell said that manpower problems were eased somewhat when several new employees were hired in Denver. Terrell also said the Slayman Ali Troupe of Arab acrobats would join in Greeley, Colo., July 26, and he remarked that he was continuing to build up the performance.

Freddie Freeman, who was the show's official *Billboard* correspondent, and wrote a gossip type column each week had some interesting items in this same issue. He said that Gracie Hanneford was now back in the performance and noted that the lot back in Hastings, Neb., July 16, was the most beautiful so far in the season, just like someone's lawn.

After Denver the show played Pueblo, Colo. the next day, and Colorado Springs, July 24. Then came a 134 mile run on the Colorado and Southern Railroad (Burlington Route) to Loveland, Colo., where two performances were scheduled for Sunday, July 25.

The stand in Loveland was monumental for the author as my two years jinx which had seen me miss out on the show in both 1941 and 1942 was broken. First Lieutenant Joe Bradbury, U. S. Army, stationed at Ft. Francis E. Warren, Cheyenne, Wyoming, was indeed on hand in Loveland, catching some of the unloading operations, later spending some time visiting on the lot, and in the evening was present in the reserve seats for the performance. It was the first time I had caught Cole Bros. since its initial season of 1935 and was an occasion I well remember.

I had noted in the route section of *Billboard* that Cole would play Loveland; the great news was that it would be on Sunday when I would have no army duties. Since I had my

automobile with me transportation would pose no problem. Gasoline rationing had come to the area by then but despite that we were still able to get around pretty good and were on the road almost every weekend to Laramie, Rocky Mountain National Park, Denver or Colorado Springs. How was all of this travelling accomplished with gas rationing? Well, you never knew a boozer to get thirsty during prohibition, did you? Actually Loveland was only about 50 miles from Cheyenne, southward on the road to Denver. I had been there many times. You'd go right through Loveland enroute to Rocky Mountain National Park. Just take a right in Loveland and follow the highway thru the Big Thompson Canyon, site of the tragic flood a short time ago, and less than 30 miles brought you to Estes Park Village, gateway to the park.

Several of my fellow soldiers rode with me that day to catch Cole Bros. We arrived in the C & S yards about 9 a.m. and found the train had come in but as yet they had not begun to unload the flat cars, so I got a good look at the train. Noted with interest the flats were painted yellow and was not aware previously that the color scheme had changed from the traditional aluminum, or silver. Again I will mention I cannot with certainty recall the color of the stock cars but believe they were yellow. No doubt about the coaches, red with silver or white lettering. If I could move back in time to that day in Loveland I would never have left the show for a minute, but we had planned to go on to Estes Park and spend a few hours and then return in time to catch the evening performance. So after about 20 minutes and still little unloading activity we drove on through the Big Thompson Canyon to Estes Park, then up to Bear Lake Lodge for lunch. The Lodge was a great place, way up in the mountains at about 12,000 ft. where the rarified at-



Photo No. 21 - Portion of lead stock, 2 hybrids, zebra, and llama, tethered to baggage wagon No. 88 on Cole Bros. lot at McCook, Neb., July 17, 1943. Photo by Joe Fleming.

mosphere gave a couple of beers the wallop of a six pack. At that time of year the resorts were filled with unattached friendly females and some of our group would just as soon have scrubbed the circus performance on the schedule for other activities, but the driver would have none of that. The girls would still be there next weekend. Cole Bros. would not. Anyway, shortly after lunch we headed back to Loveland and arrived late in the afternoon while the matinee performance was still going on. We hung around the lot for some time, then went into town for dinner, and then back to the lot and were standing in the midway when the sideshow band assembled under the large canvas canopy over the bally platform and struck up one of the old time minstrel type tunes which sends the crowd scurrying to gather in front and await Arthur Hoffman's opening. We didn't take in the sideshow but were among the first to go through the front door into the menagerie for a lengthy stay before then heading on into the big top.

I well remember the tremendous equine acts the show had that season and the marvelous riding act of the Poodles Hanneford Family. Eddie Woekener's band sounded like a million that night and it seemed ages since I'd heard a real circus band, well, it had been a long time. Russell Bros. in 1939. Although I had caught Ringling-Barnum back in Atlanta the previous October while home on leave, the Big Show band at the time was on strike and the customers were served a rather unsavory dish of canned (recorded) music.

Patriotism was sky high in those World War II days and when the flag bearers came by during the opening spec, everyone in uniform stood and saluted and most of the civilians also rose. Actually it wasn't necessary to

salute since they were only flags, not colors (get some old soldier to explain the difference to you) but we did anyway and during the final Victory spec stood and cheered during the entire production. The audience exited the big top in a happy frame of mind and my companions and myself were in great spirit as we left the lot to begin the dark and lonesome hour's ride back to Cheyenne. There were only a few cars on the road and the usual compliment of jack rabbits. I reflected on the day just ending and the happy days in Cheyenne which I knew would soon be coming to a close for me. In only three weeks I would be enroute to Ft. Leonard Wood, Mo. to join a unit soon to be moved overseas and the pleasant weekends at Estes Park, Laramie, and Denver would become only memories. In a few short months I'd be in England and shortly thereafter in France.

As it turned out the 1943 Cole Bros. show which I caught in Loveland would be the last circus I would see until King Bros. in the fall of 1947. The Cole program I got in Loveland is shown in Photo No. 1. It was one of only two circus moments I took with me overseas, the other being the 1942 Ringling-Barnum program. During the 28 months in Europe I must have read it from cover to cover a hundred times—literally. It's a wonder it ever survived intact. Thumbing through this program provided many a pleasant moment during the long days in Europe as it brought back to mind the great visit to Cole Bros. in Loveland.

Cole next played Greeley, Colo. where the Slayman Ali Troupe was to join, however unless I am badly mistaken they came on earlier and performed in Loveland.

The show then entered Wyoming for a stand at Laramie, moved back into Nebraska for Sidney and Scottsbluff, then returned to Wyoming for dates at Casper and Thermopolis. Sunday, August 1, saw Cole in Montana at Billings with stands to follow at Lewiston, Great Falls, Helena, Butte, and Dillon. Montana business was very good. In Helena, August 4, the



Photo No. 22 - Mother Goose tableau with 4 pony hitch in backyard ready for spec at McCook, Neb., July 17, 1943. Photo by Joe Fleming.

weather was favorable except for a slight thundershower just after the matinee began. A capacity house was on hand at night. Billings, initial stand in the state, produced two capacity houses, while Lewistown, a population of only 6,000 on a rainy day and the train not arriving until noon, gave a straw house at a 4 p.m. matinee and almost capacity at night. Great Falls had two straws and at Butte there was an overflow matinee and two shows were necessary in the evening. P.M. Silloway had a nice article in the *Billboard* titled, "Cole Getting Over the Road" in which he reported his visit to the show at several stands in his native Montana. He said the show has practically no handicaps in transportation, the chief hinderances being experienced manpower in getting up and down. Silloway observed that every performer including the stars stands by to help get the show ready for the scheduled 3 p.m. matinee. It was mentioned the show donated 192 long tickets for each performance for war bond purchasers and was selling an average of \$50,000 in bonds daily. It appears that the number of tickets given for bond purchasers varied in different places, probably according to the size of the city being played.

Dillon, Montana, an afternoon only stand played August 6 was a sad one for the Cole personnel. Lightning struck and killed Pitt, the last of the herd of John Robinson Military Elephants. She had been given to the show the previous December and this was her first season with Cole Bros. The bolt knocked down 3 of the elephants but the other 2 were not injured. The animal was buried on the Dillon fairgrounds lot and Terrell told the local press that an appropriate grave marker would be placed there, and in time it was and should be still there to this day. The death of Pitt

reduced the Cole Bros. elephant herd to 15.

After the final stand in Montana the show played Idaho Falls, Idaho and following a 185 mile run on the Union Pacific went to Salt Lake City, Utah for two days, August 9-10. Last year the show only spent one day in the city but with the area swollen with war workers and armed forces personnel it was decided to play two days. It was a wise decision. There were four capacity houses in spite of two matinees being given in 96 degree heat. The crowds were on the straw at both evening shows, the final one had them up to the ring curbs. The show was set up on the fairgrounds and the arrangement was not too good, but the efficient staff handled the traffic problems to perfection. Streetcar and bus services were overcrowded but they took care of the crowds pretty good. The show's management told *The Billboard* that the entire Salt Lake area was filled with pocket heavy war workers and this was a situation the show liked. Freddie Freeman in his column said the Salt Lake City lot was the dustiest in the world.

Two additional towns in Utah, Provo, and Ogden were played, then the show moved into Idaho for dates at Pocatello, Twin Falls, an afternoon only at Burley, Boise, Nampa, and Payette.

The August 28, 1943 *Billboard* commented on Cole's tour through the western states saying that the West was taxing the show's capacity and there had been such good business for the last few weeks, a light house would be a novelty. The extra big business starting in Denver has followed the show. Provo, Ogden, and Pocatello gave straw houses, and Twin Falls also had two full ones. Burley's single performance saw the crowd sitting on the straw to the ring curbs. At Pocatello, August 13, the show date and dated with Siebrand Shows (carnival). So far Cole Bros. had not encountered any real close opposition from other shows, a marked contrast to several of them. Russell Bros. and Arthur Bros. had fought an old time circus war up the Pacific coast. Russell had moved over into Idaho before Cole arrived but Dailey Bros. was in the state at the same time as Cole but the two shows did not come in close contact with each other.

The Sept. 4, 1943 *Billboard* also had an article about Cole's tour of Idaho and other areas of late. The piece said that straw houses were continuing for the show, and again mentioned the good business at the matinee only in Burley, observing that the town of only 4000 provided an estimated 10,000 on the over flowcrowd which were seated practically everywhere in the big top, even on the ring curbs. Other notes said the war bond sales had been



Photo No. 15 - Mack truck pulling Cole Bros. baggage wagons No's 90, 88, 82, and 87 along string of flats to unloading runs, season of 1943. Pfening Collection.

terrific. Jimmie Reiffenach, who had been drafted a few weeks earlier, returned to the show at Boise after failing to pass the physical exam because of his past injuries. He immediately went back into the Poodles Hanneford riding act. The new backyard canopy made in Salt Lake City has arrived and is welcomed by performing personnel.

After Idaho the show moved into Oregon for dates at LaGrande and Pendleton, then went on to Washington with initial stand coming at Walla Walla, August 21. The show was in Spokane two days, August 23-24, where there was an advance bond sale of over 100 G's. Additional Washington stands came at Wenatchee, Everett, four days in Seattle, Tacoma, and Longview. In Seattle Jimmie Reiffenach took a nasty fall and was out of the program for several days.

Cole Bros. next entered Oregon with first date being a four day stand in Portland where the superb business encountered during the past few weeks finally tapered off. The Sept. 18, 1943 *Billboard* told the story of the below par Portland date by saying Cole was the third show to play the city. Both Arthur Bros. and Russell Bros. had

been in earlier and apparently relieved the natives of their spare change. The gross was way off and the article said it was an uphill fight throughout the four day stand, Sept. 2-5, in a field that had already been well worked over by the two smaller shows. The weather was favorable and newspapers cooperated well. Sideshow business held up a little better than fair, and bond sales drew some, nothing outstanding. Poodles Hanneford returned to his act in Portland after being out several days with three broken ribs. Just about everyone in Poodles act was injured sometime during the 1943 season. Freddie Freeman said he counted 27 banners hanging in the big top during the stand. A sad epilog to the Portland stand was that Albert Powell, popular clown on the show, suffered a heart attack while in the city and died four days later.

Leaving Portland the show played other stands in the state at Salem, Corvallis, Eugene, Roseburg, and Medford, then moved into California with initial date coming at Redding, September 11. Chico and Marysville followed and at Sacramento, Sept. 14, the show had satisfactory business. The weather was mild with the afternoon house being about two-thirds full and kids admitted on a reduced rate due to arrangements made with a local department store. About 6000 saw the show at night. Vallejo came next and then the show moved into the Bay Area for four days in Oakland, which was followed by single stands in Palo Alto, San Mateo, Santa Cruz, and San Jose.

Photo No. 28 - Cole Bros. elephant herd on lot at Galveston, Texas, Nov. 6, 1943. Photo by William H.B. Jones.





Cole was at Stockton, Sept. 24, set up on a lot at Stockton Boulevard and 16th Avenue which was not as close to the heart of town as other available circus sites but for the show with the particular railroad routing it was using the new lot was the most economical. While in Stockton the show purchased a fine pair of kangaroos for the menagerie.

Moving on southward Cole played Modesto, Fresno, Visalia, Bakersfield, where 3 shows were given, and then Glendale where a night only performance was given September 29 and two shows the following day. A ten day run in Los Angeles began October 1 with show set up on the Hill and Washington streets lot. The advance car remained in town until October 7. There was a large amount of newspaper publicity and the city was well billed. Art LaRue, clown cop and a group of other clowns, joined in L. A. to remain 14 days. Members of the Pacific Coast Showmen's Association were guests of Terrell on Monday night, October 4. First day of the stand saw great business, the next day both shows completely sold out, and the third, on a Sunday, three shows were given. The weekend was extremely profitable as passes were not good for either Saturday or Sunday. While in Los Angeles the ten days gave the personnel and stock a much needed rest but Freddie Freeman wrote that he was glad to finally leave the city as he was exhausted from the almost continuous round of parties being given. The trade publications noted that Gracie Hanneford had returned to the performance indicating she had again been injured some days before. The Oct. 24, 1943 *Billboard* said that Cole's Los Angeles stand was one of the greatest in the history of the city.

Leaving L. A. the show continued in the area with dates at North Hollywood, Pasadena, Alhambra, and Santa Ana and the terrific business did not let up. The Oct. 30, 1943 *Billboard* said that at North Hollywood the show had two straw houses and at Pasadena on a lot within the shadow of the Rose Bowl three performances were given with an estimated 2000 turned away.

Photo No. 29 - Baggage wagon No. 84 mired in mud after storm hit Cole Bros. on the lot at Galveston, Texas, Nov. 6, 1943. Photo by William H.B. Jones.

Alhambra, Oct. 13, also saw three shows. A number of new animals purchased while Cole was in the Los Angeles area included 6 Palamino stallions, 2 jumping horses, and a magnificent Bengal tiger. Terrell said he planned to purchase more horses before the season closed.

Cole played three days in Long Beach, Oct. 15-17, then two days in Santa Monica, followed by single stands at Pomona, San Bernadino, and Riverside, Oct. 23, which was the final date in California.

In the meantime it had been announced in late September that Cole Bros. would again winter in Louisville, however since the government had taken over virtually all of the fairgrounds the show would be unable to use any of the buildings for quarters purposes. A new site adjacent to the fairgrounds had been obtained and buildings to house the show were under construction. Additional details appeared in the trade publications as the show's route continued.

After California Cole moved eastward fast across Arizona and after a 375 mile Sunday run over the Southern Pacific set up in Phoenix for a two day stand, Oct. 25-26. Single dates in Tucson and Douglas followed. While in Douglas, Ariz. Oct. 28, the show's lone male elephant, Joe, was executed. He had been a bad character for some time but I do not know the circumstances which led to the decision to have him killed, nor do I know the method of execution. Probably it was by rifle fire. The death of Joe reduced the Cole elephant herd to 14.

The show entered Texas at El Paso for a two day stand, Oct. 29-30, and enjoyed four capacity houses. An extremely long Sunday run over the Southern Pacific of 617 miles then took the show to San Antonio for a two day engagement, Nov. 1-2 and more big business. Two days in Corpus Christi followed and both evenings saw the crowd on the straw. Bay City played

November 5 had a capacity matinee and three quarters crowd at night. Originally the show had planned to play Houston for three days, Nov. 5-7, but after complications developed cancelled out and substituted Bay City for one day and two in Galveston. When Ringling-Barnum decided not to play Houston Cole Bros. leased the ball park lot but the city council would not issue a permit because of the political clout of the Arabia Shrine Temple which had its own sponsored circus set for the city, Nov. 6-14. The Cole show had posted more than \$1200.00 in billing paper and had gone to considerable other expense but general agent, Newman, finally gave up the fight to get a permit when he saw the extreme political pressure being exerted on the city council, some of it coming from several ex governors and men from the State Comptroller's office, not to issue the permit.

The substituted dates in Galveston, Nov. 6-7, proved to be disastrous for the show. The bad weather which had hurt the show so much during the early part of the 1943 season returned with a vengeance to haunt it again during the final days of the season. This time it came in a full fledged hurricane off the Gulf which just about wrecked the show completely in Galveston.

The Nov. 20, 1943 *Billboard* told the story of the near disaster with headlines, "COLE HARD HIT AS BLOWDOWN TAKES BIG TOLL. GALVESTON TWISTER SWEEPS LOT. Three towns missed before show can be given." The article continued saying one of the most disastrous storms in circus history hit Cole at Galveston, Texas where the show was set up for a two day stand, Nov. 6-7. Arriving late from Bay City, Texas personnel worked in mud and water to erect tents for the first matinee but the storm hit before show time leveling the menagerie top and some of the smaller dressing rooms. The full force of the storm was felt about 6 p.m. as the hurricane coming off the Gulf of Mexico developed into 40 mile intensity. The order was issued by Terrell to slough the show and everyone turned to loading trunks and equipment. The padroom went down just as the horses were being moved to the train and the winds soon thereafter leveled the ballet and band tops. Performers and laborers struggled in mud and knee deep water caused by the torrential rains. Capt. Bill Curtis and his crew, including Terrell personally, remained in the big top until the last moment and it is said that given 10 more minutes the top would have been lowered to the ground. However, the storm became a 60 mile an hour hurricane and the beautiful blue top could stand it no more. With a ripping and rending of ropes and canvas it crashed to the ground, the center and

quarter poles going with it. Luckily, everyone scurried to safety and no one was seriously injured. The cookhouse was the last to go down. Everyone labored most of the night and by noon Sunday, Nov. 7, everything was gathered and loaded on the train. The show had planned to play Beaumont, Nov. 8-9, but weather conditions were too bad to consider attempting to show and the Cole train proceeded on to Alexandria, La. where two days, Nov. 10-11, had been scheduled. The train stopped in Alexandria but did not unload while an examination of the lot was made. It was found the lot was in no condition for set up so Terrell ordered the train on to Monroe, La. where it arrived on Monday afternoon, Nov. 8, and the show unloaded. Canvas was spread and a score of sailmakers plus all hands patched the canvas. Most damage had been done to the big top. Show date in Monroe was originally scheduled only for Friday, Nov. 12, but after the equipment got in good enough shape to be used Terrell decided to also give two performances on Thursday, Nov. 11, so the show played a total of two full days in Monroe. At last it was back on schedule and played Jackson, Miss., Nov. 13, in accordance with its original billing. The train arrived late in Jackson and first truck did not get on the lot until 12 noon. The matinee went on at 4:15 p.m. and the show drew approximately 15,500 for both performances. Observers on the lot noted that the tents were still ragged in places and all of the mud had not been washed out.

The final week of the 1943 season began at Shreveport, La. with a two day stand, Nov. 15-16, followed by two days in Texarkana, Ark., and the final stand of the season came at Little Rock, Ark., two days, Nov. 19-20. After the final performance in Little Rock the show moved immediately over the Missouri Pacific 149 miles to Memphis and then on the Illinois Central the final 393 miles to its quarters in Louisville. Total mileage of the 1943 season according to the official route book was 14,281.

The Dec. 11, 1943 *Billboard* said the show had completed its biggest year, playing 400 shows in 148 cities. Bond sales were heavy throughout the season. The article said that the show was now in its newly built permanent quarters on the Kentucky State Fair grounds in Louisville. Completed are the sleeping quarters, wardrobe building, animal barns, and offices which have been under construction since July. Commissary, shops, and a large ring barn are yet to be finished. The result is a more compact quarters than possible when the show used the fair buildings, now taken over by the government for war storage space. The zoo is open to the public on Sundays and holidays at 28¢ for adults and 17¢



Photo No. 30 - Loading Cole Bros. train after storm inflicted serious damage to the show on the lot at Galveston, Texas, Nov. 6, 1943. Section of flats at right has been loaded and baggage wagon No. 90 is starting up runs of section of flats at left. Photo by William H. B. Jones.

for children, service men and women. It is planned that no performances will be given this winter but a tour of the quarters substituted. The zoo opened November 28. The circus was given the necessary War Production Board priorities for construction of the buildings with a minimum of difficulty. Harry Thomas said that more than 1 million in war bonds were sold during the season. Apparently besides aid to the war and patriotic effort the deal helped the circus because the government made sure the show got to its dates which were also important to Uncle Sam because of the bond sales. The show train was given travel priority. The article further said that the concrete ring barn is under construction also and that the wardrobe room is large enough for 12 electric sewing machines to work. Wagons are stored in a large brick building until ready for the carpenter and paint shops. Rail cars are on a siding inside the quarters and Terrell remarked it is

the most convenient quarters he's ever had. Final notes said that the show had lost 136 men to the armed forces during the past two years but few of them were performers since accidents in the ring have put most of them in category 4-F.

The Dec. 18, 1943 *Billboard* gave the last news from the Cole quarters before the end of the year, saying the zoo was heavily patronized and good newspaper and radio publicity was being given it. Harry Thomas and Glen Garard act as guides and lecturers for tours of the quarters and Fuzz Plunkett explains and demonstrates methods of training sea lions. Noyelles Burkhart is general manager of the quarters. Plans were announced for a pretentious spec to be given in 1944 but the show was not ready to release the title.

And so 1943, the second full year of World War II, came to an end. At times the show did the biggest business in its history and had not adverse weather both at the beginning and end of the season been so financially detrimental to the show there is no doubt 1943 would have been the most profitable season in Cole Bros. history. According to Noyelles Burkhart that honor still belongs to 1942.

Cole Bros. Train Loading Order
McCook, Neb. July '17, 1943
as recorded by Joe Fleming
4 Stock Cars - No's 37, 36, 35, 34
8 Sleepers - No's 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57
12 Flat Cars - loaded as follows
No. 39 - Cages (5)
No. 40 - Cages (5)
No. 38 - Wagons No's 83, 92, 72, 73, 51
No. 41 - Wagons No's 81, 93, 85, 89
No. 43 - Wagons No's 84, 86, 75, 74
No. 49 - Wagons 100, 20, 21, Mother Goose Tab, Little Stake Driver, 40.
No. 42 - Wagons 101, Woman in Shoe Tab, 65, 63 (Red ticket wagon).
No. 48 - Mack Truck No. 1, No. 62 (Columbia tab, reserve seat ticket wagon); 70, 30.
No. 46 - Mack Truck No. 3, 90, 87, 88, 82
No. 45 - Caterpillar tractor, 80, 99, motorcycle with side car.
No. 47 - Mack Truck No. 4, 50, 91, 52
No. 44 - Mack Truck No. 2, 61, caterpillar tractor on carry-all, station wagon.

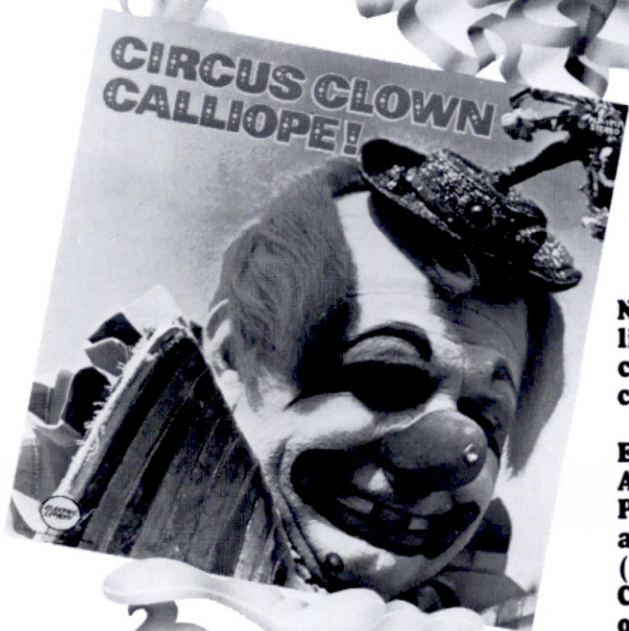
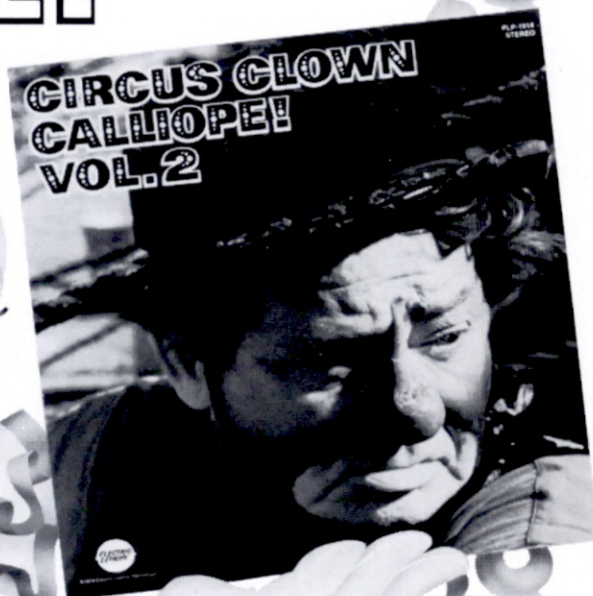


| DATE | TOWN | STATE | R. R. | MILES |
|-------------|--------------|----------|------------|-------|
| April 21 | Louisville | Kentucky | | |
| 22 | " | " | | |
| 23 | " | " | | |
| 24 | " | " | | |
| 25 | " | " | | |
| 26 | Owensboro | " | L. & N. | 113 |
| 27 | Evansville | Indiana | L. & N. | 42 |
| 28 | Terra Haute | " | C. & E. I. | 110 |
| 29 | Indianapolis | " | N. Y. C. | 72 |
| 30 | " | " | " | |
| May 1 | " | " | " | |
| 2 | " | " | " | |
| 3 | Lafayette | " | N. Y. C. | 65 |
| 4 | Anderson | " | N. Y. C. | 102 |
| 5 | Hamilton | Ohio | Penn. | 120 |
| 6 | Cincinnati | " | B. & O. | 24 |
| 7 | " | " | " | |
| 8 | " | " | " | |
| 9 | " | " | " | |
| Total Miles | | | | 648 |

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Season's Greetings

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MAGIC SHOWS
PUPPET SHOWS**

**Winter Season
Dec. 14 thru March 28**





Circus World Museum Collection.

The Sparks Circus - through 1928

by Gordon M. Carver

Correction: Mrs. Vera "Sparks" Wiseman, wife of Clifton Sparks, has corrected us about the origin of the name Sparks and its use. John H. Wiseman was, as we know, first a hall performer. Sometime early in his career for reasons now unknown, he adopted the name "Sparks" as his stage name. It was later that he met and adopted Charles whose true name Mrs. Wiseman cannot now recall, but which she says had a Jewish or German sound to it. In any event it was Charles Sparks who took his adopted father's stage name rather than the other way around as we originally stated. I might add that while Mrs. Clifton now uses the original family name of Wiseman,

her son, Clifton, Jr., uses the name Sparks.

Season of 1917

Now that "Sparks World Famous Shows", one of the titles it was using, had moved up to fifteen cars and thus to the medium size class, and, had become well established with the public as well as with the performers, the *Billboard* began to take much more notice of it. In general, starting with

The Sparks four stock cars are pictured with four of the six wooden flat cars in a photo taken in the period of 1917 to 1919. Woodcock Collection.

1917 there was much more news in its columns about the show. And so we begin to learn more about it.

During February and March, winter-quarters in Salisbury, North Carolina, were active with preparations for the coming summer. Fletcher Smith, who was to start the season at his old job of Press Agent back with the show, but would leave before the season was over and be replaced by William Morgan, was supervising all the painting. All cars, including the advance car, were orange with red letters and gold trim. The baggage wagons were red with yellow wheels and gear. Again Fritz Brunner was adding new routines to his lion act for the aftershow. With W.W.I. patriotism high he was training one lion to shoot a cannon and another to wave a U.S. flag.

Plans were being made to open the season in the winter-quarters home town, Salisbury. This was to be the next to last year the show would winter there. While the town of Salisbury had always been hospitable to the Sparks show and since no reason was given for leaving it must be presumed that with the show growing in size the winter-quarters were no longer large enough to accomodate it. So after billing the countryside for the show's opening there on Wednesday, April 11, the bright orange, red and gold advance car under the supervision of James Randolph left Salisbury for the next to last time.

The opening of the season was well covered by the *Billboard*. Instead of flag bearers, two lady buglers were at the head of the parade. An eight horse team pulled the lead bandwagon, the "Dancing Girls" tableau decorated with gold carvings on a red background. Although, the *Billboard* stated that it carried sixteen musicians, this wagon would be overcrowded with this number on it so we must assume this to be an exaggeration. Since Jack Phillips band actually had nineteen players we would speculate that there were two bandwagons, each with ten musicians. Fletcher Smith who played the snare drum, probably made the tenth man in the second band. It certainly had been the practice over the last few years to





The number two side show and candy stands are shown in Ithaca, N.Y. in 1917. Pfening Collection.

have a second big show band in the parade. Then there was also the side show minstrel band of eleven pieces, a clown band of six, and both an air calliope played E. L. Doty and the steam calliope played by Harry F. Wills. In addition to the four bandwagons referred to above there was one other tableau wagon which carried performers, making a total of five, the same wagons as in 1916.

In addition to the bandwagons and tableaux the show had seven cages, three regular cages, three short cross cages and the sea lion tank cage. One or two of these cages were probably new but we cannot be certain. This made a total of fourteen wagons in the parade which were pulled by one 8 horse, six 6 horse, three 4 horse and four 2 horse hitchers. The eight horse, as already indicated, and the 6 horse hitchers were on the tableaux, steam calliope and one cage. The rest of the horses were used on the cages, cross cages and unafon wagon.

The parade was filled out by at least three mounted groups, one of ladies, one of men and one of six cowboys and cowgirls. Finally there were two dromedary camels and four elephants, Queenie, Topsy, Ollie and Mutt. The costumes, always kept in top notch condition and now new, and the wagons, newly painted as always each year and well maintained during the season, made for a sparkling parade. As noteworthy comment, unusual for shows of this size, the elephants wore sequined velvet blankets rather than the shoddy advertising banners that so many shows covered their elephants with. In summing up, it was a fine parade, typical of all that Sparks stood for.

As the folks arrived at the lot they were greeted by two ticket wagons, the still new office wagon and the small "Two Dolphin" tab which was used for reserved seat sales. Also there was the

side show and a pit show. The side show featured a snake charmer; trained cockatoos and monkeys; a bag puncher; oriental dancers; and again "Prof." Wright's Dixie Minstrels with a troupe of fourteen musicians, singers, dancers and comedians, including Mrs. Wright, the "Prof's" wife, who played the cornet and sang and danced. Walter McGinnis and his crew of ten got the canvas, bannerline and props up and down. The pit show, a smaller side show, featured Rusbo, the cannibal child; a small cage of monkeys; a giant "gorilla" and Boisy Lambert, snake girl. This show had its own crew of canvasmen. The doll rack was still doing business on the midway and there were three "picture men" who did a land office business taking small tintype pictures. A balloon man and two who sold wire jewelry and bird whistlers on a stick were also busy. And of course, there was a food stand which dispensed candy and lemonade.

The program, was, like that of 1916, given in two rings and on a center stage under the direction of Bert Mayo, Equestrian Director:

- 1 - Grand Entry
- 2 - Woolford's statue horses and dogs
- 3 - In the rings juggling par excellence by Frank Decker and Tracy Andrews
- 4 - In the rings comedy mule hurdle acts by Frank LaVine and Fred Crandall
On the stage the Wheeler Brothers in comedy acrobatics
- 5 - On the track menage riding by Bert Mayo, Dolly Eskew, Merritt Bellew and Myrtle Mayo
- 6 - Louise Nelson, swinging ladder Horace Laird, roman rings Miss Webber, swinging ladder
- 7 - In the rings principal equestriennes, Eunice DeMott and Margaret Crandall
- 8 - Head balancing, the Nelsons Hand balancing, the Gabbetts Contortion, Irma Winslow
- 9 - Elephant presented by Lewis Reed and Merritt Bellew



The Sparks menagerie canvas wagon is shown during the 1918 season. The man on the right is Roland Tiebor, the seal trainer. Woodcock Collection.

- 10 - Acrobatics supreme, the Wheeler Brphthers
- 11 - The Gabbetts on roman rings Harry Mick in Hoop rolling Virginia McLain on the slack wire
- 12 - Liberty horses trained by Bert Mayo with Jet Black Stallions and Merritt Belew with Arabians
- 13 - Tiebor's seals and sea lions performed by Ray Wesley
- 14 - In the rings two marvelous wire acts
The Nelsons and Connors and Irmenis
- 15 - Principal carrying acts
The DeMotts and Fred and Margaret Crandall
- 16 - Aerial marvels on the double trapeze
The Webbers and The McLains
- 17 - Sensational close - bucking mule and spinning pony by Bert Mayo

The after show had Fritz Brunner and his trained lions and the wild west acts of trick riding and trick and fancy roping. The clown alley had ten names on the roster including some who were still working within fairly recent years - Jack Klippel, Horace Laird and Kinko.

All totaled there were 44 performers on the show including Bert Mayo, Equestrian Director, and Louis Reed, Superintendent of Elephants. The side show and pit show roster included 21 plus the band of 19. These, plus the non-performing personnel added up to a total staff back with the show of 262 persons, almost exactly the same as in 1916.

One change was an increase in the draft stock from 58 horses to 68, and an increase in drivers from eleven to sixteen including the two train team drivers. The driver breakdown was: one 8 horse, six 6 horse, three 4 horse and six 2 horse. This was the only



change in the working departments that was of any significance.

As the show moved into the Pittsburgh area of Pennsylvania in the second week of May it ran into considerable peripheral opposition. In the vicinity were Ringling Bros. World's Greatest, Barnum and Bailey Greatest Show on Earth, Hagenbeck-Wallace, Sells-Floto and John Robinson shows, all big ones. Also in the area were the smaller shows of Coop & Lent, LaTena, and Cook Bros. plus several carnivals. But even with all these shows in this general area Sparks had no day and date encounters. On May 21 when the show played Vandegrift John Sparks, who was now living there, having abandoned the gypsy circus life, entertained all the show folks at his movie theatre with a special showing of a Douglas Fairbanks film.

After about a week in western Pennsylvania the show moved into New York for just under two weeks finishing up in Poughkeepsie, June 11 and entering the New England states at Danbury, Connecticut, the next day. They made a very thorough tour of those states, excepting Vermont, for exactly two months finishing at Stamford, Connecticut, August 11. During this period, Ollie, one of the show's two baby elephants died at Gardner, Massachusetts, on July 28. It had almost died during the intense heat the day before at Athol. The cause of death was not known for sure, but was believed to have been caused by some poisonous weeds eaten a few days before. This left the show with only three elephants, two large ones and one baby.

The *Billboard* gave the show a one column plug covering its stand in Bridgeport, August 10. It remarked that this was the show's third visit to the New England states and second in which the big cities had been visited. In Bridgeport, and generally, the show had had very good business. Here the public was surprised by having the parade downtown at 10:30 as advertised. While no detailed review was

The Sparks midway is pictured in 1918. The side show is on the left and the pit show on the right. Woodcock Collection.

given it commented that it has "a lot of good old time circus atmosphere, several novelties, a beautiful statue act performed by the McLains, some beautiful high school horses - notably one handled by Bert Mayo - a clever bunch of seals and a good track worker in "Miss Mix" (?)." It also mentioned that Mrs. Sparks spends most of her time in the seats or at the cars and dining tent overseeing their cleanliness.

Also given special mention was Decker, the clown who "is a neat juggler" and who does two especially good walkarounds - The Pickpocket and the Wall Street Leak. Then in the September 29 *Billboard* there appeared a photo of the clowns on the show, Rube Walters, the above Frank Decker, Frank Loring, Arthur LaRue, Paul Young, Tracy Andrews and Buster Marsh, three less than on the show at its opening.

As will be seen from the route printed elsewhere, after leaving New England they started what in later years was to become a standard part of their schedule, a week on Long Island. Then after going quickly through New Jersey and Pennsylvania they went again into the Mid-west for about four weeks. They started the final part of their tour the last week in September with two weeks in Tennessee followed by six and a half weeks in Georgia and closed out with a week in Alabama.

Then they made a 653 mile run from Greenville, Alabama, the closing stand, November 24, to Cincinnati where they were to occupy the former winterquarters of the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus it last used in 1914. One of the buildings had two rings and a steel arena. The reason they did not return to Salisbury for this one winter after so many pleasant off seasons there was never given but we can assume that it was influenced in some way by the war. At the end of 1918 after

the war was over they would again return to Salisbury, although that would in fact become their last time there before moving finally to Macon, Georgia, at the end of the 1919 season.

Without specifics it was reported that the season, 32 weeks long, had been wonderfully prosperous and that the show had materially added to its already excellent reputation.

Route Season of 1917

April

11. Salisbury, N.C.; 12. Reidsville, N.C.; 13. Danville, Va.; 14. South Boston, Va.

16. Lynchburg, Va.; 17. Salem, Va.; 18. Princeton, W. Va.; 19. Tains, W. Va.; 20. Beckley, W. Va.; 21. Mt. Hope, W. Va.

23. Charleston, W. Va.; 24. Montgomery, W. Va.; 25. Hinton, W. Va.; 26. Clifton Forge, Va.; 27. Roncerverte, W. Va.; 28. Marlinton, W. Va.

30. Elkins, W. Va.

May

1. Buckhannon, W. Va.; 2. Clarksburg, W. Va.; 3. Fairmont, W. Va.; 4. Weston, W. Va.; 5. Richwood, W. Va.

7. Morgantown, W. Va.; 8. Uniontown, Penn.; 9. Scottdale, Penn.; 10. Denora, Penn.; 11. Homestead, Penn.; 12. Ambridge, Penn.

14. Steubenville, Ohio; 15. Massillon, Ohio; 16. Akron, Ohio; 17. Ravenna, Ohio; 18. Ellwood City, Penn.; 19. McKees Rocks, Penn.

21. Vandegrift, Penn.; 22. East Brady, Penn.; 23. Kittanning, Penn.; 24. New Kensington, Penn.; 25. Butler, Penn.; 26. Indiana, Penn.

28. Punxsautawney, Penn.; 29. Dubois, Penn.; 30. Bradford, Penn.; 31. Wellsville, N.Y.

Charles Sparks in front of the marquee in 1918. Woodcock Collection.



June

1. Hornell, N.Y.; 2. Corning, N.Y.
4. Seneca Falls, N.Y.; 5. Geneva, N.Y.;
6. Ithaca, N.Y.; 7. Cortland, N.Y.; 8.
Rome, N.Y.; 9. Herkimer, N.Y.
11. Poughkeepsie, N.Y.; 12. Danbury,
Conn.; 13. Naugatuck, Conn.; 14. New
Britain, Conn.; 15. Torrington, Conn.;
16. Ansonia, Conn.
18. Waterbury, Conn.; 19.
Manchester, Conn.; 20. Willimantic,
Conn.; 21. Putnam, Conn.; 22.
Southbridge, Mass.; 23. Webster, Mass.
25. Woonsocket, R. I.; 26. Pawtucket,
R. I.; 27. New Bedford, Mass.; 28.
Brockton, Mass.; 29. Taunton, Mass.;
30. Framingham, Mass.

July

2. Lowell, Mass.; 3. Portsmouth, N.
H.; 4. Portland, Me.; 5. Rockland, Me.; 6.
Bath, Me.; 7. Rumford Falls, Me.
9. Fort Kent, Me.; 10. VanBuren, Me.;
11. Caribou, Me.; 12. Presque Isle, Me.;
13. Holton, Me.; 14. Millinocket, Me.
16. Calais, Me.; 17. East Port, Me.; 18.
Machias, Me.; 19. Bangor, Me.; 20.
Augusta, Me.; 21. Belfast, Me.
23. Lewiston, Me.; 24. Biddeford, Me.;
25. Haverhill, Mass.; 26. Nashua, N.H.;
27. Athol, Mass.; 28. Gardner, Mass.
30. Marlborough, Mass.; 31.
Worcester, Mass.

August

1. Millford, Mass.; 2. Plymouth,
Mass.; 3. Hyannis, Mass.; 4. Falmouth,
Mass.
6. Bristol, R.I.; 7. Westerly, R.I.; 8.
Norwich, Conn.; 9. New London, Conn.;
10. Bridgeport, Conn.; 11. Stamford,
Conn.
13. Hemstead, Long Island, N.Y.; 14.
Glen Cove, Long Island, N.Y.; 15. Hunt-
ington, Long Island, N.Y.; 16.
Pachogue, Long Island, N.Y.; 17.
Southampton, Long Island, N.Y.; 18.
Bay Shore, Long Island, N.Y.
20. Asbury Park, N.Y.; 21. Long
Branch, N.J.; 22. Norristown, Penn.; 23.
Frederick, Md.; 24. Martinsburg, W.
Va.; 25. Charles Town, W. Va.
27. Lexington, Va.; 28. Pulaski, Va.;
29. Wytheville, Va.; 30. Bluefield, W.
Va.; 31. Williamson, W. Va.

September

1. Ironton, Ohio.
3. Portsmouth, Ohio; 4. Peebles, Ohio;
5. Hillsboro, Ohio; 6. Osgood, Ind.; 7.
Brownstown, Ind.; 8. Washington, Ind.
10. Olney, Ill.; 11. Flora, Ill.; 12. Fair-
field, Ill.; 13. Vienna, Ill.; 14.
Lawrenceville, Ill.; 15. Brazil, Ind.
17. Casey, Ill.; 18. Effingham, Ill.; 19.
Greeneville, Ill.; 20. Mt. Vernon, Ill.; 21.
Benton, Ill.; 22. Metropolis, Ill.
24. Union City, Tenn.; 25. Hunt-
ington, Tenn.; 26. Dickson, Tenn.; 27.
Lebanon, Tenn.; 28. Murfreesboro,
Tenn.; 29. Shelbyville, Tenn.

October

1. Tullahoma, Tenn.; 2. Winchester,
Tenn.; 3. South Pittsburg, Tenn.; 4.
Calhoun, Ga.; 5. Senoia, Ga.; 6. Talbot-
ton, Ga.
8. Oglethorpe, Ga.; 9. Vienna, Ga.; 10.



This short cage carried one lion and was pulled by a four horse hitch in the 1919 Sparks parade. William H.B. Jones Photo.

Tifton, Ga.; 11. Ashburn, Ga.; 12. Cam-
milla, Ga.; 13. Sylvester, Ga.

15. Hawkinsville, Ga.; 16. Eastman,
Ga.; 17. Wrightsville, Ga.; 18. Tennille,
Ga.; 19. Eatonton, Ga.; 20. Madison, Ga.

22. Gainesville, Ga.; 23. Jefferson,
Ga.; 24. Winder, Ga.; 25. Monroe, Ga.;
26. Convers, Ga.; 27. Washington, Ga.
29. Sparta, Ga.; 30. Wrenton, Ga.; 31.
Wrens, Ga.

November

1. Waynesboro, Ga.; 2. Sylvania, Ga.;
3. Springfield, Ga.

5. Savannah, Ga.; 6. Statesboro, Ga.;
7. Stillmore, Ga.; 8. Wadley, Ga.; 9.
Millen, Ga.; 10. Hazlehurst, Ga.

12. Nashville, Ga.; 13. Albany, Ga.;
14. Dawson, Ga.; 15. Cuthbert, Ga.; 16.
Bainbridge, Ga.; 17. Arlington, Ga.

19. Dothan, Ala.; 20. Florala, Ala.; 21.
Andalusia, Ala.; 22. Brewton, Ala.; 23.
Evergreen, Ala.; 24. Greenville, Ala.

Season of 1918

In spite of the fact that the show's winterquarters were practically next door to the offices of the *Billboard* in Cincinnati very little news appeared that winter. The United States was now fully engaged in World War I and the shortage in both men and materials was being fully felt by show business. An ad for musicians in March asked for "experienced men exempt from the draft". It was to be a rough year for Sparks as it was for all the traveling shows. While it was to be hard to keep the shows moving, generally it was to turn out to be financially very successful - money was plentiful and people were looking for ways to ease concerns about the war.

It is interesting to note that Fletcher Smith who had been Press Represent-
ative Back with the show for several years, but who had left in mid-season of 1917, was again with it. And again,

as jack of all trades, he was directing the winterquarters work of repairing, repainting and varnishing all the wagons.

In the same issue of the *Billboard*, April 6, mentioning Fletcher Smith, it was announced that the show would open in Reading, Ohio, at Vine and Mill Streets, only a 5¢ car ride from downtown Cincinnati on Friday April 20. All persons who were signed for the season were to report at 10 a.m. Wednesday, April 17. At this late date the show was still short handed of both performers and workmen for they were asking for feature acts, clowns, novelty acts for big show, comedy juggler, and novelty acts for the side show.

But inspite of these troubles the show did open as announced on April 20 at Reading. However, the day was a showery one with heavy downpours coming just before both the afternoon and evening performances. In spite of this there were good crowds at both shows. Reading had not been visited by a circus in several years and the audience at both performances showered applause on the performers.

Under the direction of Bert Mayo, Equestrian Director, with the audience sitting on new seats providing greater capacity the show opened with a patriotic spec in which two of the performers played the roles of Columbus and Uncle Sam. The costumes displayed were typical of Sparks productions, beautiful. As reported in the *Billboard* this opening display was followed by:

2 - The McLains, man, lady, four dogs and a horse gave a series of beautiful poses on the center stage.

3 - Rube Walters doing mule hurdles, Marsh and Mead, comedy acrobatics, Frank Levine, mule hurdles.

4 - Cake walking and menage horses ridden by Myrtle Mayo, and Miss O'Wesney in the rings and Bert Mayo and Ray O'Wesney on the track - a beautiful act.

5 - The Tokio troupe in feats of daring.
6 - The Earles in clever roman ring work over ring 1; On the stage, Harry Mick in hoop rolling; Miss Irma in an acrobatic novelty over ring 2.
7 - Classy bareback riding acts; Walter Quice in ring 1; Flora Bedini in ring 2.
8 - Sparks herd of wonderfully trained elephants presented by Louise Reed in ring 1, Ray O'Wesney in ring 2.

(While we have no direct evidence there are indications that Sparks had obtained three new elephants over the winter to bring the show's herd up to six.)

9 - Over ring 1 Miss Earle in a swinging ladder novelty; Over ring 2 Chester Sherman in iron jaw work.

10 - The Tokio troupe in startling feats of lofty balancing

11 - Well trained stallions directed by Bert Mayo in ring 1, Lisle Connors in ring 2.

On the stage Miss O'Wesney working dogs and ponies.

12 - The Two Walters (Guice) experts on the horizontal bars.

13 - Captain Tiebor's seals and sea lions showed wonderful intelligence. One feat deserving of particular mention is the sea lion walking a tightrope while bouncing a ball on his nose. (Twenty years later Captain Tiebor had his seal lions doing the same trick on the Ringling Bros. - Barnum & Bailey Circus.)

14 - A. Bracia, contortionist in ring 1; The Connors in ring 2 in a skillful wire act.

15 - Beautiful bareback carrying acts by the O'Wesneys in ring 1; The Guices in ring 2.

16 - Clever double trapeze acts, The McLains over ring 1; The Earles over ring 2.

17 - A bucking mule and a pony on a revolving table worked by Bert Mayo.

For the first time in years Fritz Brunner and his trained lions were not in the aftershow. Instead the concert performance was strictly a wild west show headed by Jim Eskew with five boys and two girls. It is interesting to note that one of the boys, who was to become famous in his own right some years later, was Ken Maynard.

Fletcher Smith handled the announcements in the big top before the days of the electronic loudspeakers, and it was said that he could be heard distinctly throughout the tent. The music also came in for its share of praise. Jack Phillips continued as bandleader with sixteen men under his direction, only two less than started the 1917 season. Seven of the men had also been with the band in 1917.

The clown contingent with eleven "keeping the audience in happy mood" was larger than in 1917 in spite of the war. One of the clowns was Kenneth Waite who later was to spend some years with both Cole Bros. and Ringling Bros. - Barnum & Bailey circuses.

START EARLY
Don't Miss
The Train

YOUR STATION AGENT KNOWS ABOUT IT—ASK HIM

THE WESTERN MARYLAND RY.
HOTEL B.C.

ROUND TRIP EXCURSION
Takes to SPARKS WORLD FAMOUS CIRCUS (SHOWS) from all Stations on route at the following Extraordinary Low Rate of Fare to

ELKINS AND RETURN

SPARKS
WORLD FAMOUS
CIRCUS

HIPPODROME AND MENAGERIE
COMBINED WITH
THE BEST TRAINED ANIMAL EXPOSITION
ON EARTH

A Multitude of New Features Never before presented in America

SPARKS WORLD FAMOUS CIRCUS
SCHOOLED, ALSO UNTRAINED

THE MOST ASTOUNDING ACT EVER EXPLOITED

A HERD OF PERFORMING ELEPHANTS

WILL EXHIBIT AFTERNOON AND EVENING AT
ELKINS, W. VA., MON. APR. 30

| HUTTONSVILLE BRANCH | | | BELMONT BRANCH | | |
|---------------------|--------------|--------|----------------|--------------------|--------|
| A. M. | From | Fare | A. M. | From | Fare |
| 7:55 | Huttonsville | \$0.75 | 11:20 | Belmont | \$0.75 |
| 8:00 | Mill Creek | 30 | 11:30 | Chambers | 30 |
| 8:05 | Croft | 30 | 11:35 | Jeffer | 30 |
| 8:08 | Valley Road | 30 | 11:40 | Garner | 30 |
| 8:12 | Valley | 30 | 11:45 | Marling Creek Jct. | 30 |
| 8:16 | Dukey | 30 | 11:50 | Smith | 30 |
| 8:20 | Berrett | 30 | 12:01 | Belton | 30 |
| 8:25 | Trepan | 30 | 12:05 | Hanna | 30 |
| 8:30 | Arnold Hill | 15 | 12:10 | Elkins | 15 |
| 8:36 | Todd | 15 | | | |

Returning Train No. 45 will leave Elkins, April 30th, at 4:35 P. M.

C. F. STEWART,
General Passenger Agent

YOU WILL BE IN TIME FOR THE GRAND FREE STREET PARADE AND OTHER FREE EXHIBITIONS

This 1917 herald used by Sparks told of the excursion train trips that were offered by the Western Maryland Railroad into Elkins, West Virginia, for the April 30 date. One train arrived in Elkins at 8:45 a.m. and left at 5:15 p.m., allowing time for the parade and a full day at the circus. Pfening Collection.

Only three of the clowns had been with Sparks previously.

The side show was again managed by Cal Towers. For the first time in several years there was no competition from a pit show. The side show, however, had more acts than at any former time. Arthur Wright still had the band and minstrels. The other attractions were a mind reader; a comedy

juggler; a "floating lady"; Bessie, the Arizona girl (?); trained cockatoos; and three oriental dancers.

The staff of the show had few changes from previous years. There were only six new department heads - side show canvas, cookhouse, draft stock, trains, lights and properties. All the rest of the staff had been with the show for one or more seasons, several having been with it for a number of years.

Although the show seemed to start the tour with only a minimum of manpower problems, by June and for the rest of the summer it was difficult going. However, by September the problem seemed to ease somewhat. During June, July and August there were only three weeks in which no "want" ads appeared in the *Billboard*. In early June they were asking for billposters; cornet and trombone players; iron jaw, novelty and aerial acts; blacksmith, assistant boss canvasman, and working men. Then later they also wanted an alto player as well as the cornet and trombone players; comedy acrobatic act and two good clowns; and oriental dancers for the side show. While these latter ladies were not being drafted, apparently there was much movement between shows and other jobs where better salaries were available.

As the show moved into July and August bandmen were still in short supply as were billposters, lithographers and a car cook on the advance; double trapeze act; clowns and wild west people; and seatmen and drivers in all departments. And finally at the end of August they had lost their trainmaster and needed a replacement. Some little picture of the problems of moving even a small-medium sized show was given in the August 24, *Billboard*. "Sparks Circus claims the most distinguished stake pulling crew. They have worked sixteen weeks without a missed night. They are Clifton Sparks, Harry Wills (on pole), Jack Beach, Fletcher Smith (on wheels), and Al Dracula (throwing the chain)." It may be interesting that Jack Beach was many years later to become a member of the Circus Model Builders.

But all was not rough going. There were a few bright spots. During the summer there were a baby camel, three baby leopards and some baby monkeys born and added to the menagerie. Then in mid-September the advance car was involved in a train wreck, but suffered no damage, no injuries and lost only a half day of its schedule which within two days was made up.

The route as will be seen elsewhere wisely kept the show away from the East where wartime train movements kept the railroads very busy and which resulted in many delays for those shows which ventured into that territory. Western Pennsylvania was

as far east as the show got. It then went into the mid-west and upper mid-west. As the season wound down it moved back through Ohio into Kentucky and Tennessee, finishing the last two weeks of the season in North Carolina.

Opposition during the season was minimal and very scattered. Not until Sparks reached North Carolina did it have any problems. Here it found the John Robinson Circus following it into several towns. Local papers carried such ads as "after the minnow comes the whale" put out by Robinson while Sparks retaliated "that the promised whale might be a Jonah".

Finally the show closed, early for Sparks, on Thursday, October 4, at Wadesboro, North Carolina. While the show packed up in Wadesboro and moved to the next stand Lawinburg that had been billed, no show was given there. Instead it was decided to cancel that town and several others that had been billed and move immediately to Salisbury where they were again to winter. The reason for this abrupt and early closing was the Flu epidemic which was then beginning to rage and the resulting quarantines that were being placed in many towns.

While the season was cut short and there had been problems in getting and keeping help, it had, nevertheless, been another successful one financially for Charles Sparks.

Route Season of 1918

April

20. Reading, Ohio.
22. Middletown; 23. London; 24. Coshocton; 25. Canal Dover; 26. Salem; 27. Ambridge, Pa.
29. Steubenville, Ohio; 30. New Brighton, Pa.

May

1. Sharon; 2. Greenville; 3. Meadville; 4. Grove City.
6. Butler; 7. Kittanning; 8. New Kensington; 9. McKeesport; 10. Homestead; 11. Donora.
13. Vandergrift; 14. Latrobe; 15. Indiana; 16. Patton; 17. Punxsutawney; 18. Mt. Union.
20. Clearfield; 21. Phillipsburg; 22. Tyrone; 23. Bellefonte; 24. Lock Haven; 25. Renovo.
27. Emporium; 28. Ridgeway; 29. Warren; 30. Oil City.

June

1. Barberton.
3. Akron, Ohio; 4. Wooster; 5. Bucyrus; 6. Tiffin; 7. Defiance; 8. Angola, Ind.
10. Kendallville; 11. Goshen; 12. LaPorte; 13. Gary; 14. DeKalb, Ill.; 15. Rockford; 16. McHenry; 17. Evanston; 18. Waukegan; 19. Kenosha, Wis.; 20. Manitowoc; 21. Antigo; 22. Rhinelander.
24. Park Falls; 25. Ironwood, Mich.; 26. Ashland, Wis.; 27. Cumberland; 28.

Eau Claire; 29. Lake City, Minn.

July

1. Glencoe; 2. Olivia; 3. Granite Falls; 4. Litchfield; 5. Cambridge; 6. Anoka.
8. Albany; 9. Long Prairie; 10. Park Rapids; 11. Fossiton; 12. Stephan; 13. Hallock.
15. Langdon, N.D.; 16. Hillsboro; 17. Cavalier; 18. Grafton; 19. Twin Valley, Minn.; 20. Henning.
22. Glenwood; 23. Eden Valley; 24. Buffalo; 25. St. Croix Falls, Wis.; 26. Barron; 27. Ladysmith.
29. Medford; 30. Stanley; 31. Chippewa Falls.

August

1. River Falls; 2. Menomonie; 3. Mondovi.
5. Black River Falls; 6. Neilsville; 7. Marshfield; 8. Grand Rapids; 9. Sparta; 10. Hillsboro.
12. Lancaster; 13. Dodgeville; 14. Evansville; 15. Lake Geneva; 16. Indiana Harbor, Ind.; 17. Renessalaer.
19. Attica; 20. Clinton; 21. Princeton; 22. Huntington; 23. Fairfield, Ill.; 24. Harrisburg.
26. Duquoin, Ind.; 27. Anna, Ill.; 28. Herrin; 29. Benton; 30. Mt. Vernon; 31. McLeansboro.

September

2. Madisonville, Ky.; 3. Hartford; 4. Glasgow; 5. Shelbyville; 6. Richmond; 7. Paris.
9. Bowling Green; 10. Springfield, Tenn.; 11. Lewisburg; 12. Pulaski; 13. Columbus; 14. Sheffield, Ala.
16. Cleveland, Tenn.; 17. Lenoir City; 18. Greenville; 19. Rogersville; 20. Newport; 21. Canton, N.C.
23. Salisbury; 24. Albemarle; 25. Concord; 26. Hickory; 27. Lenoir; 28. Lincolnton.
30. Caroleen.

October

1. Shelby; 2. Monroe; 3. Wadesboro.

The bannerline and marquee of the Sparks show is pictured in 1919. This photo and others by William H. B. Jones were taken in Hattiesburg, Miss. on Sept. 15, 1919.



Season of 1919

The war was now over and most shows were expecting better conditions. Certainly it was expected that help would again be plentiful while at the same time it was hoped that people would be looking for entertainment as a release from the wartime tensions. So with these circumstances in mind, Sparks, like all the shows in the U.S., was making ready for a good season.

It is interesting that the December 7, 1918 *Billboard* announced that Mr. Sparks had purchased and had shipped to winterquarters a new stake driver. It is also interesting that there is no record of the show carrying such a modern work saving device at least as late as 1922. Our guess is that with the much improved availability of labor after the war it was decided not to use the flat car space for such a "luxury".

Little or no news of any kind appeared in the *Billboard* prior to the seasons opening at Salisbury, winter-quarters town, on Tuesday, April 1. We can only assume that the roster, both working and performing, were complete early in the year. Only Jack Phillips had an ad for musicians in mid-February.

The show had a very successful opening with a big afternoon and capacity evening attendance, and Fletcher Smith had a long review of it in the April 13 issue of the *Billboard*. While no display by display listing of the performance was given most of the acts seemed to have been named along with brief descriptions of their performances.

The show opened with a spectacle on the track, the two rings and on the stage to the music of Sousa's "Stars and Stripes Forever" played by Jack Phillips band of sixteen pieces. For the following hour and forty-five minutes the program never ceased to gain applause after each number. "Captain Tiebor presented a new act with six sea lions, including Frisco the talking seal, which proved a sensational



The Sparks ladies' Red Cross unit posed for this photo during the 1918 season. Woodcock Collection.

feature. The Three Walters, Walter Guice, Walter Kent assisted by Flora Bedini put on their new aerial horizontal bar act which proved a big hit." (Over the next ten years this was, off and on, to be a feature on the Sparks show).

"The Orton Family with Norma, Myron and Ira were in a wire act that was magnificently costumed and was one of the leading features of the show. Lewis Reed offered a novelty in two herds of elephants that played a game of football on the track and later moved to the two rings where they were worked by Lois O'Wesney and Madge Evans to big applause. The Aerial Yorks and the Earles furnished thrills in mid-air. Si Kitchie, Dempe Eno, Hiro Matoka and Kyo Namba with the Sassi troupe astonished the audience with their acrobatic feats and juggling. Kyo Namba walked up and down stairs on his head, Si Kitchie juggled while upside down on a trapeze (seen by your author twenty years later doing the same stunts) and the head slides by Matoka, all stood out as distinctive features.

"Flora Bedini with Walter Guice and the O'Wesneys did some splendid bareback riding. The clowning under the direction of William Delavoy was better than usual. Myron Orton shone in several original walkarounds. There were six menage horses performing simultaneously while as many ladies on swinging ladders and the flying perch were doing their acts at the same time. The finish of the show, Captain O'Wesney's high jumping horses, was a novelty greatly appreciated." It is obvious from the foregoing that not all of the numbers, only the principal ones, were enumerated. For instance, no mention is made of a liberty horse number although we are reasonably certain that there was one under the direction of Captain O'Wesney, who had replaced Bert Mayo as Equestrian Director. In addition to the two clowns men-

tioned above, there were seven others making a total of nine in clown alley only one of whom, Harry Mick, was a holdover from previous years.

Following the main show the wild west aftershow led by Col. Joe Greer drew large audiences at both shows. Col. Joe Greer had seven men, including Carlos Carreon, and three girls including Mrs. Greer and Madge Evans, for a total of eleven - a large wild west group for a show the size of Sparks. Of course some of these also worked in the main show. Carlos Carreon undoubtedly rode menage and also probably worked in the liberty horse act as he had in 1918. And Madge Evans we know worked the elephants and undoubtedly also worked menage.

Although the side show manager, Col. Pete Stanton, was new, most of the acts were holdovers from 1918. J. S. Harto was again doing magic and inside lecturing. Other returnees were Verda Wren, lady bag puncher (bag punching acts were for many years popular side show acts and on many shows); Hilda and her snakes; Prof. Giovanni's trained cockatoos (another popular type of side show act); and Dubois, comedy juggler. Arthur Wright and his Dixie Minstrels were back again becoming almost a fixture in the Sparks side show. Also featured was an oriental dancing group but the girls were all new - they seemed to come and go. The one new feature was an outstanding money getter - Capt. Bobetta and Nero, the untameable lion. There were two ticket sellers on the front of the show and E. L. Doty was again taking tickets at the front door as well as playing the unafon in the parade. There was also again a small pit show under the direction of Albert Keller, but we do not know what the attraction was.

Perhaps a word of mention should be made about Captain Bobetta's untameable lion act. Many shows of this period had such acts in their side shows. The trainer would enter the cage, normally a regular cage wagon, not an arena as was used in the big top, with much shouting, slamming and rattling of the cage door and shooting



The 1919 Sparks baseball team posed in their special uniforms. Woodcock Collection.

of his blank pistol. The lion would snarl, spit and claw at the trainer making a show of great ferocity. This sort of thing went on for two or three minutes and then it was all over until the next show - perhaps every fifteen or twenty minutes during the time the side show was open for business. As I said this was a popular side show attraction on many shows.

Sells-Floto Circus had this type of show but in their case it was a whole second side show in which trained wild animal acts were presented. But it was unusual for a smaller show such as Sparks to have it in their side show. Many of the shows which did carry them had them as a pit show rather than in the side show. Incidentally, the cage wagon was also used as a prop wagon. This was done by crowding the lion into the front third or quarter of the wagon with a removable partition and storing props in the back and during the night time moves.

The staff remained virtually the same as it had for the last few years but there were many changes among the department heads. Only three of the principal ones from previous years were back. George Singleton still had the canvas, Louis Reed both the elephants and the menagerie animals and Albert Keller the privileges and the pit show. The new names that for the most part replaced persons who had been with the show for two or three years or more were: W. C. Cross, trainer; Clark Smith, draft stock; Harry Flowers, ring stock; Garry Vanderbilt, dining department; Gerry Vanderbilt, wardrobe; Steve Cross, props; and Orville Speers, lights.

Fletcher Smith, previously mentioned, was spending his eleventh year with the show as a jack of all trades. He handled press on the show, sold reserved seat tickets in the big top before the show and was the big show announcer as already noted. He was also the *Billboard* correspondent and last but not least he played the snare

drum in the second band in the parade. Except for T. W. Ballenger, General Agent, he was Sparks oldest employee having joined the show first in 1909 and had been with it every season since, except for a brief sojourn the last couple of months of the 1918 season when he joined the Walter L. Main show.

After the opening in Salisbury, the show moved into South Carolina for a week and then as will be seen from the route elsewhere, through North Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland (only one stand), Pennsylvania, Ohio and New York. At Kinton, North Carolina, April 15, a horse was struck by a train and had to be killed. At Salem, Ohio, May 26, they had two capacity houses. On June 9 they entered Canada at St. Catharines, Ontario. They were to stay in Canada through August 16, over two months. This was the start of a long and profitable association with the people of Canada.

The next day, June 10, at Brantford the local paper published what was a fairly typical "puff" description of the arrival of the show and the parade. It is a combination of the local reporter's own observations plus material fed to him by "Major" Fletcher Smith. But it does give a good general impression of what the local people thought of the show.

"Big Sparks Shows make their first visit to Canada - Canadian officials favorably impressed after inspecting the creditable aggregation at Tonawanda, N.Y. Two performances to be given in Recreation Park.

"It's all here today, the circus with its red lemonade, toy balloons, fat girl and living skeleton, lions, tigers, barking seals, six big elephants and everything.

"The First section of the Sparks Circus train reached the city early this morning and was detrained at the Grand Trunk depot.

"Before even the early riser had enjoyed his breakfast, the show was on the lot and the big tents were going up in the air on Recreation Park. First erected was the dining room and cookhouse where 300 employees were fed their first meal from 8 to 9 o'clock. Then the four stables were put up and filled with as fine specimens of work and draft horses ever seen here.

"The side show with its freaks and novelties, the menagerie where seals barked, lions roared and tigers snarled all day with the monkey family chattering from time to time, to be in the running, and the big main exhibition tent seating 3,500 people went up in the order named.

"The Sparks Circus comes to Brantford an entire stranger but the large crowd out to the show grounds all day gained a very favorable impression of the show not only from the bright



This tableau wagon was on the Cummins Wild West, Martin Down's Cole Bros., Jones Bros. Cole Bros., Buffalo Ranch, Jones & Wilson before being purchased by Charles Sparks in 1918. Sparks replaced the clown and donkey center carvings with a lyre and winged head. This photo was taken in 1919, but the wagon remained with Sparks through the final season of 1931. William H. B. Jones Photo.

attractive looks of the of the outfit but from the conduct of every attendee. The working men were orderly, indulged in no loud talk or profane language and answered questions civilly. Major Smith, the Press Agent of the show, states that while new to Canada the Sparks Circus is one of the best known popular amusement institutions of the States ranking third in size on the list of traveling shows. Its winter home is in North Carolina and it left winter quarters early in April. Since then it has visited seven States and will be in Canada 6 weeks. (It actually turned out to be nine weeks). The circus performance is given in 2 rings and an elevated platform, and the program is so arranged that the feature acts are worked singly giving all a chance to see and enjoy them.

"The show is now in its thirty sixth season and has played every section of the States during this time. Canadian officials according to Major Smith, who saw the show at North Tonawanda and inspected the outfit pronounced it the neatest and cleanest circus they had ever seen. It is up to the show people today to make good with the public.

"The Sparks Circus parade this morning has done much to establish the show as one of merit. It was on the main streets promptly on time, was of good length and as bright and attractive street display as one would wish to see.

"It presented the usual display of gold and gilded dens, many of them open, giving the onlookers a fine view

of the wild animals, a section of good looking women riding coal black horses and wearing costumes of red. Three tandem teams attracted the most attention of any feature in the long line. The main band heading the parade was neatly uniformed and riding atop a red and gold tableau wagon playing real music and there was a colored band that jazzed jazzily farther down the line. The clowns also had a band that Burlesques the late popular airs. Elephants and camels and the calliope brought up the rear and the operator surprised everybody by his rendition of "Maple Leaf Forever". Wild west cowboys and cowgirls, spurred and chapped, struck terror to the youthful mind, and the seals that frolicked in the big tank of water, attracted more than passing notice.

"The Sparks Management was more than liberal with his use of the National colors, flags displayed on every cage and the outriders carrying handsome banners. The show has every indication of being worthwhile and if it is as good as the parade will be well worth seeing".

We hope it was. This description is a very good example of how the parade could be used to whet the peoples' appetite and to coax them to the ticket wagons.

Help on all shows in this year immediately following W.W.I was still not easy to get. Starting in June the Sparks show like all others was constantly advertising for help of all kinds. This continued through August and then stopped. Apparently as the season began to near its end performers and others settled down and stayed put for Sparks last "Want" ad appeared in the August 23 *Billboard* although the season still had over three months to run.

The various advertisements during this time asked for "Novelty acts, comedy acrobatic act, clowns, side show acts, colored musicians for the side show, features for the side show." This



last makes us wonder if the lion tamer had left. Again "Strong feature act for the big show, comedy acrobatic act, clowns, wild west people, novelty side show acts, slide trombone and comedian for colored band." Next a couple of weeks later they wanted "single iron jaw, wild west people, useful circus performers (were they so desperate that anything would do), musicians for colored side show band. Next came an ad for even greater variety, "Circus performers, troupe of Japs, wire act, clowns, novelty act for side show, slide trombone and clarinet for colored side show band, working men and six horse drivers." This was the first ad in which workmen were being solicited.

Finally at the end of August two ads appeared in the same issue. The first tells us that O'Wesney, the Equestrian Director, horse trainer and rider had left. "Want Equestrian Director who can ride menage and break stock. Also circus performers in all lines." And then the second ad which seems to sum up all that went before, "Circus performers in all lines. Two people wire

A canvas covered parade tableau wagon and baggage wagon are parked beside the big top on a Sparks lot in 1919. William H.B. Jones Photo.

Walter Guice with his wife Flora Bendi had the riding act on the Sparks show in 1919. The clown is Walter Kent. Pfening Collection.

act, single iron jaw, comedy acts, troupe of Japs, riders with own stock, wild west people, novelty side show act, good blacksmith." Needing all these people it would seem that the performance must have been pretty thin. Perhaps after they returned to the States they got all they wanted for that was the last ad of the season.

The show returned to the States August 18 at West Branch, Michigan. On September 8, after slipping through Michigan, Indiana, Missouri and Arkansas it reached Mississippi. Thereafter it played in Alabama, Georgia, Florida and South and North Carolina. Its season ended December 11 at Bradenton, Florida a little over eight months after it started. It would have been a week longer except that a coal strike forced the cancellation of the last week - Arcadia, Ft. Myers, Wachula, Bartow, Sanford and Palatka, all Florida.

From Bradenton the show moved to its new winter quarters in Macon, Georgia, where it was to remain for the last years of its life under the

ownership of Charles Sparks. It was reported that business for the season had been excellent. It cited Tampa, as being typical of many stands played, where people were on the ground even though it was to be followed by the Ringling-Barnum show within a few days. Only two performances were missed during the entire season, a rather remarkable experience.

There was only one untoward event during the season. At Macon, Georgia, while billing the town October 9 for the show's appearance there on October 23, the advance car was badly burned. Much advertising paper and many personal belongings belonging to the crew were lost. However, the Georgia Central R.R. shops located there were able to repair the car so that it was put behind schedule only three days.

The last word of the show in 1919 came at the end of November and really bore on the coming 1920 season, not on the one just past. Four 60 foot flats, one 60 foot stock car, one 60 foot elephant car and one 68 foot sleeper were offered for sale. Since the other two flats and two stocks that the show had were not offered for sale we must presume that they had already been spoken for. This was being done we believe because they were to be replaced by the larger and stronger MT. Vernon cars. So far as it can be determined Sparks was the second show to go to all steel cars - Hagenbeck-Wallace being the first. Certainly we know that they added more wagons the next year without increasing the number of cars.

Route Season of 1919 April

1. Salisbury, N.C.; 2. Rock Hill, S.C.; 3. Gafney; 4. Union; 5. Greenville.
7. Anderson; 8. Greenwood; 9. Chester; 10. Rockingham, N.C.; 11. Lumberton; 12. Wilmington.
14. New Bern; 15. Kinston; 16. Robertsonville; 17. Rocky Mount; 18. Wilson; 19. Fayetteville.
21. Raleigh; 22. Henderson; 23. Suf-

The midway candy stand is pictured on the Sparks show in 1918. Woodcock Collection.



folk, Va.; 24. Elizabeth City, N.C.; 25. Norfolk, Va.; 26. Norfolk, Va.
28. Newport News; 29. Richmond; 30. Charlottesville.

May

1. Staunton; 2. Clifton Forge; 3. Hinton, W.Va.
5. Beckley; 6. Ronceverte; 7. Marlinton; 8. Elkins; 9. Weston; 10. Richwood.
12. Clarksburg; 13. Fairmont; 14. Morgantown; 15. Grafton; 16. Cumberland, Md.; 17. Somerset, Pa.
19. Vandergrift; 20. Latrobe; 21. Indiana; 22. New Kensington; 23. Homestead; 24. Ambridge.
26. Salem, Ohio; 27. Dover, Ohio; 28. Barberton; 29. Lorain; 30. Akron; 31. Painesville.

June

2. Ashtabula; 3. Dunkirk, N.Y.; 4. Wellsville; 5. Hornell; 6. Batavia; 7. North Tonawanda.
9. St. Catharines, Ont.; 10. Brantford; 11. London; 12. St. Thomas; 13. Woodstock; 14. Hanover.
16. Owen Sound; 17. Stratford; 18. Kitchner; 19. Guelph; 20. Collingwood; 21. Barre.
23. Oshawa; 24. Cobourg; 25. Belleville; 26. Lindsey; 27. Parry Sound; 28. Sudbury.
30. Midland.

July

1. Bracebridge; 2. Campbellford; 3. Napanee; 4. Kingston; 5. Cornwall.

7. Valleyfield, Que.; 8. Lachienne; 9. St. Johns; 10. Granby; 11. St. Hyacinthe; 12. Victoriaville.
14. Sherbrooke; 15. Thetford Mines; 16. Quebec; 17. LaTuque; 18. Roberval; 19. Chicoutimi.

21. Grand Mere; 22. St. Jerome, Que.; 23. Hawkesbury, Ont.; 24. Hull; 25. Brockville; 26. Perth.

28. Renfrew; 29. Pembroke; 30. Sturgeon Falls; 31. North Bay.

August

1. North Cobalt; 2. Timmons.
4. Huntsville; 5. Orilla; 6. New Market; 7. Brampton; 8. Tilsonburg, 9. Simcoe.

11. Welland; 12. Galt; 13. Goderich; 14. Petrolia; 15. Chatham; 16. Windsor.

18. West Branch, Mich.; 19. Petoskey; 20. Manistee; 21. Ludington; 22. Ionia; 23. Howell.

25. Huntington, Ind.; 26. Kokomo; 27. Crawfordsville; 28. Casey, Ill.; 29. Effingham; 30. Benton.

September

1. Fredericktown, Mo.; 2. Jackson, 3. Poplar Bluff; 4. Sikeston; 5. Caruthersville; 6. Blytheville, Ark.

8. Clarksdale, Miss.; 9. Rosedale; 10. Greenville; 11. Greenwood; 12. Yazoo City; 13. Jackson.

15. Hattiesburg; 16. Laurel, Miss.; 17. Meridian; 18. Tuscaloosa, Ala.; 19. Demopolis; 20. Selma.

22. Mobile; 23. Pensacola, Fla.; 24.

Andalusia, Ala.; 25. Union Springs; 26. Troy; 27. Dothan.

29. Bainbridge, Ga.; 30. Thomasville.

October

1. Moultrie; 2. Tifton; 3. Waycross; 4. Brunswick.

6-7. Savannah; 8. Statesville; 9. Waynesboro; 10. Millen; 11. Vidalia.

13. Americus; 14. Columbus; 15. Dawson; 16. Cuthbert; 17. Albany; 18. Camilla.

20. Ashburn, Ga.; 21. Cordele; 22. Eastman; 23. Macon; 24. Dublin; 25. Tonnelle.

27. Covington; 28. Madison; 29. Commerce; 30. Toccoa; 31. Royston.

November

1. Elberton.

3. Clinton, S.C.; 4. Monroe, N.C.; 5. Shelby; 6. Lincolnton; 7. Wadesboro; 8. Laurensburg.

10. Georgetown, S.C.; 11. Dillon; 12. Lake City; 13. Cheraw; 14. Camden; 15. Lancaster.

17. Winnsboro, S.C.; 18. Newberry; 19. Batesburg; 20. Bamberg; 21. Barnwell; 22. Sparta, Ga.

24. Monticello; 25. Barnesville; 26. Newman; 27. Griffin; 28. Fort Valley; 29. Quincy, Fla.

December

1. Tallahassee; 2. Lake City; 3. Live Oak; 4. Perry; 5. Gainesville; 6. Ocala.

8. St. Petersburg; 9. Plant City; 10. Tampa; 11. Bradenton.

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by Warren A. Reeder, Jr.

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EARLY PARADES, EARLY BANDWAGONS

by Charles Amidon and Stuart Thayer

illustrations by Charles Amidon

The word 'parade' made its entry into circus lexicography by way of the European fairs of the eighteenth century. A.D. Hippisley-Coxe once wrote that its use was more common in France than in England,¹ but it meant the same thing in both countries. The fair booths in which showmen presented their attractions, be they dramas, menageries or equestrian performances, were shoulder-to-shoulder on the grounds and the competition for the fairgoer's pennies was fierce. As a way of attracting customers free shows were presented on platforms in front of the booths. This practice survives today in American sideshows.

Then, as now, a few musicians, a clown or an actor would mount the platform and go through part of his routine. Supposedly, this whetted the onlooker's appetite for more. Joseph Blackburn, in 1838, said there was "more to be seen outside than in," on the platforms of the Greenwich Fair of that year.² In any event, these outside shows came to be called 'parades.' The military use of the word implied a display of preparedness, but it came to mean movement by the seventeenth century. Today, a parade is almost exclusively some kind of a march past.

When circuses began travelling alone, that is, when they moved from town to town rather than from fair to fair, they lost the drawing power of the fair grounds. In order to attract attention they would send their stock and their riders through the streets as advertising. It was this habit that was

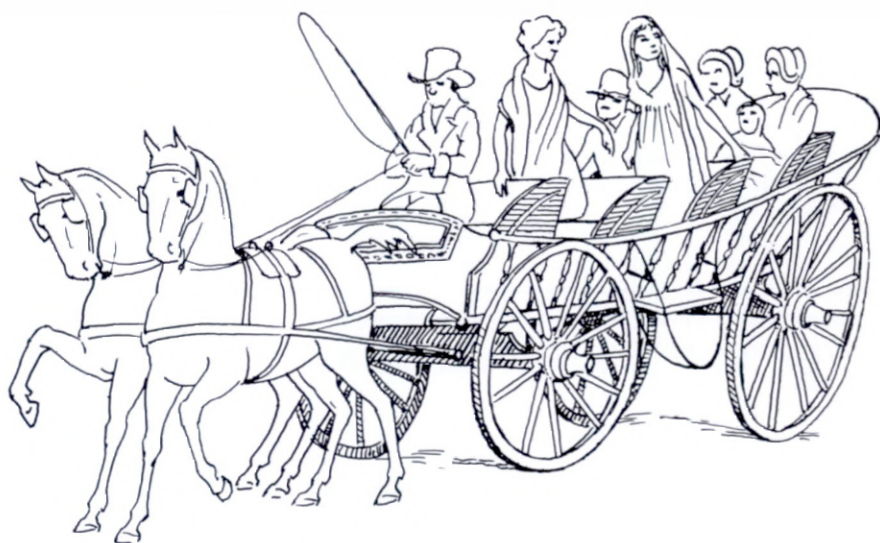


Fig. 1 German Stuhlwagen (chair wagon) of 1830's had seats suspended on straps, but no springs.

transferred to America and was the basis for the later, massive presentations of the nineteenth century.

The earliest reference to a street display in America is almost as old as the circus in this country. In John Durang's *Memoirs*³ he tells of Philip

Fig. 2 Hungarian Kotschiwagen of 1400's had fixed wheels in front with no steering action. Horses were "hookroped" individually to rear axle.



Lailson in 1797, "he would ride in equestrian procession with his full company magnificently dressed, mounted on elegant horses. . . through the streets of Phila(delphia) on the play afternoon to entice the public." Lailson had first appeared in Boston in August, 1796 and may have paraded there, but no reference to it has been found.

Victor Pepin, who performed in America between 1807 and 1827, also paraded his equestrians through the streets. The New Orleans newspaper *L'Ami des Lois* refers to this in January and March of 1822 and the *New York Clipper* of June, 1875 printed an anonymous description of Pepin's parade in Cincinnati in April, 1824.

Wagons became part of street parading because menageries used them to carry their cages. A column of wagons, spare horses and perhaps an elephant walking through town in the morning of show day was bound to create a stir of interest. The earliest description of such an event we have found is in 1832 in Newport, New Hampshire. The *New Hampshire Spectator* of August 11 of that year printed:

"The Grand Menagerie of Living Animals arrived Wednesday morning and s sight of the beautiful horses by which the carriages are drawn, particularly the six noble animals which

drew the rhinoceros, is worth more than twenty-five cents."

Admittedly, this may not refer to a formal parade, but it does give a sense of the novelty of the arrival and the type of appreciation later vested in parades. It was but a step from this to a column movement headed by a marching band and the owner in his buggy.

J.R. and William Howe and Company's New York Menagerie (the full title) paraded along Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, D.C. in March, 1834. The *National Intelligencer* described it as "an imposing spectacle." The band in a splendid omnibus was followed by the "magnificent elephant" (Columbus) and fourteen closed wagons drawn by forty white horses.

This was one of the first bandwagons. Available vehicles were adapted or constructed for the transportation of six or eight bandmen and it was the work of a moment to transform a carry-all into a moving bandshell and use the music as harbinger of the entertainment. During the 1830's and 1840's the carry-all flowered into a lavishly decorated vehicle which led to the establishment of the word 'bandwagon' in the language.

An interesting fact of bandwagon development is that both the carriage and the wagon made a contribution. Certain design elements of each go far back into European history. In this country, politics played a part in the development of vehicles. Prior to the Revolution many vehicles were imported from England and France. Native carriage and wagon builders adapted these designs to suit American wood and American roads. To encourage industry a 45% tariff was applied to imported carriages in 1800. This was almost tantamount to excluding them. American-made vehicles had characteristics from several European countries, an example being the Conestoga wagon, influenced by wagons from Holland and Germany.

The first band carry-alls were often referred to as 'omnibuses.' They were usually a springless wagon with multiple transverse seats. The German Stuhlswagen (Fig. 1) was a similar vehicle, except that its seats were suspended by straps from the sides of the wagon. A contemporary traveler complained about the "sling-shot" effect of these seats. Similar seats were used in this country in early stage wagons, such as the "Flying Machine" which carried passengers between Philadelphia and New York. The multi-seat buckboard was a later such vehicle. This type of wagon was built even after spring gear became more common, soon after the appearance of the first bandwagon.



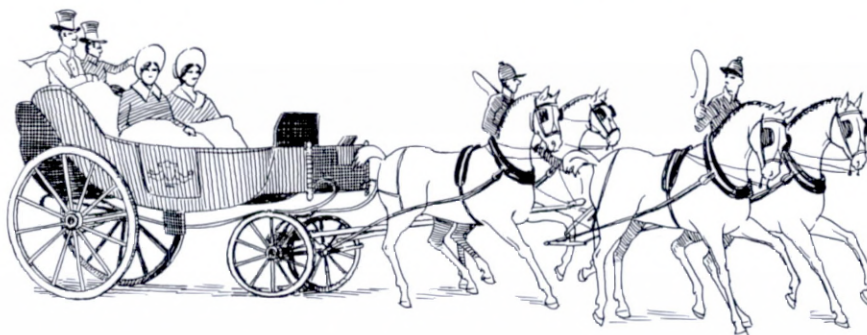
Fig. 3 High backed Dutch carriage of 1700's developed from farm wagon, had no springs.

Another type of bandwagon was usually called a 'band carriage' or 'barouche'. This was designed to be a show piece and represents a step in vehicular development leading to the beautiful Fielding shell bandchariots of the 1870's. European antecedents of the band carriage are perhaps more numerous and interesting than those of the wagon.

Laszlo Tarr's work⁴ is notable for its wealth of illustrations of early vehicles. Among them are those high-backed open bodies typical of the shell bandwagon. The Hungarian Kotschiwagen of the 1400's (Fig. 2) was springless and its front gear was not articulated, yet its light weight body of woven reeds resembles band chariots of a later day. The Dutch springless carriage of the 1700's (Fig. 3) has a similar form. The German Kalesche of the early nineteenth century (Fig. 4) continued this concept. It was the French, however, who refined both the Barouche and the Caleche, first as two-wheeled vehicles and then as elegant open carriages in which the rich could be both conspicuous and ostentatious. The barouche, particularly, was synonymous with elegance and thus became an appropriate term to describe an ornate open band carriage.

The barouche and the caleche were popular before the general use of elliptical springs; the large C-springs used on their rear axles fitted well under the

Fig. 4 Four-horse German Kalesche of early 1800's is shown driven by postillions, then the height of fashion.

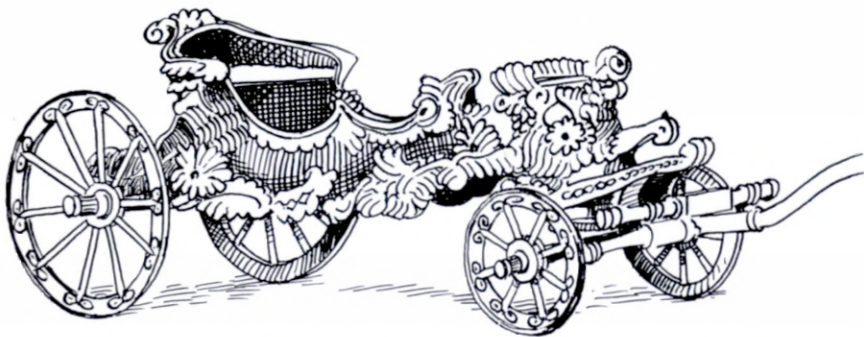


high sweep of the rear panel. The development of longer, open band carriages soon led to the concept of a raised central portion, often decorated with a plaque or a medallion. This double-curved body was described as a 'double barouche.'

Other ancestors of the shell bandwagon include highly carved open vehicles, both carriages and sleds, built for the French and Viennese courts in the eighteenth century (Fig. 5).

Interestingly, it was the menagerie, not the circus, which first used bandwagons. This must be because the menagerie travelled in a train of wagons and had to supply transportation in some form for the band. Circuses, using fewer wagons and they being utility vehicles, could expect the bandmen to ride in buggies as did the performers. Also, the menageries were featuring large bands before they became common in the circus. Every circus troupe had two or three musicians from the time of the beginning of the institution in America. They were a necessity for the accompaniment of the acts in the ring. The menageries, needing no music, would seem to have added it as an extra attraction to their otherwise static exhibitions. In 1833 J.R. and William Howe's caravan had a thirteen piece band; Purdy, Welch and Company had twelve musicians and Purdy, Welch, Macomber and Company had the ten piece Lafayette Military Band. This number of musicians obviously created some problem in transportation and providing them with their own carriage would seem to be an answer. To go from a wagon carrying the band to a special vehicle showing them off to advantage seems to us to be the line of action that historically led to bandwagons, as such.

We find no first bandwagon; we find five bandwagons introduced in the same year, 1834. There must be evidence of collusion in that fact. All of the menageries which introduced them became part of the Zoological Institute in 1835 and this simultaneous action seems to indicate either common direction or a sharing of ideas prior to



the incorporation. The five menageries were:

J.R. and Wm. Howe and Company, as above, which called theirs "the most splendid omnibus in the United States." Twelve musicians rode in it, drawn by a four-horse hitch. In New Haven they said it cost \$2,000.; in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, \$1,500., and that winter in the inventory they provided for entrance into the Zoological Institute, they said it was worth \$538.50.

June, Titus and Angevine, who in advertising their National Menagerie, said that in order to afford the fourteen-member National Band of New York "an opportunity of playing as the menagerie enters each town or village, the proprietors have built an Omnibus and have attached to it four beautiful bay horses at an expense of \$2,000."

Macomber, Welch and Company, which advertised their "splendid music carriage" and their parade of twenty-four wagons drawn by sixty gray horses.

Raymond & Ogden, who said their band would appear in a "Splendid barouche carriage drawn by four elegant horses."

J.T. and J.P. Bailey and Company's Menagerie and Circus, who spoke in their ads of their splendid barouche and its four-horse hitch.

These barouches and omnibuses we take to be "Yankee bandwagons" as they were later to be called (Fig. 6). We have found no illustration that derives directly from the 1834 season, but since that style was the most common in the following years, our assumption would seem to be the obvious one.

The one illustration we do have dates from 1835 and appeared on a lithograph of Macomber, Welch and

Fig. 5 Beautiful carved shell carriage is only survivor of eight built for 1743 ladies' parade in Vienna court.

Company (Fig. 7). It seems probable that this was their 1834 bandwagon and it is obvious that it derived from a wagon, not a caleche.

In 1835 J.R. and Wm. Howe were not on the road and we think their bandwagon passed to Nathan Howes who used it on his show that was clumsily titled "Mammoth Elephant, Menagerie and Circus," one of the early combinations of the two genres. It was the Tippoos Sultan menagerie combined with the Howes and Sands Circus. One of the first parade orders published is for this troupe and it reads:

Several proprietors on horseback.
A double barouche carriage with band.

Seven very large caravans with four-horse hitches.

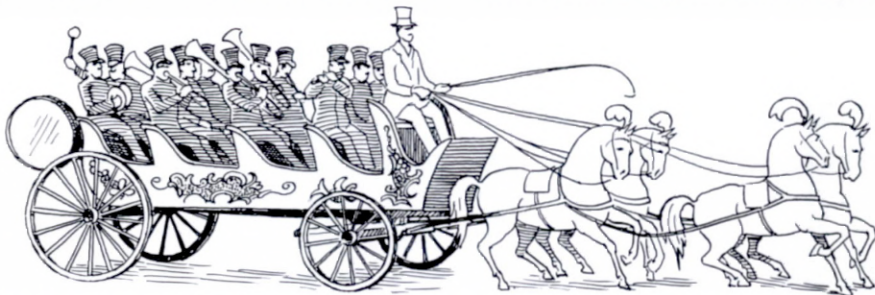
Sixteen caravans with two-horse hitches.

Provision caravan with six-horse hitch.⁵

The appearance of these five vehicles led to many imitations. Our knowledge of showmen indicates to us that nothing is novelty for long and that a business so dependent upon exaggerating its own size and splendor could not long ignore this technology.

Bancker and Harrington were the

Fig. 6 Yankee bandwagon built in Sacramento, California for Rowe's Pioneer Circus. The curved front board carried a painting of Sutter's Fort in 1848, while the rear of the wagon carried the California coat of arms. The low position of the body indicates that it rested upon a springless reach-pole gear.



first non-menagerie showmen to buy a bandwagon. Their circus of 1836 used one and their parade included fifteen equestrians and seven baggage wagons.

In the fall of 1842 Richard Sands took a troupe to England and his parade included a brass band in a carriage drawn by ten horses. This was a "Yankee bandwagon" and years later a writer said it fairly stunned the English country folk.⁶ Isaac Van Amburgh's animal show was in England at the time (and had been since 1838). The two Americans combined their shows for a tour in 1843. Van Amburgh returned to this country in 1845 and on April 20, 1846 began his tented season with a parade up Broadway in New York. This is the subject of the famous Currier and Ives lithograph and that bandwagon headed the parade. It was the Tuba Rheda or Grecian State Carriage, the first American bandwagon to be ornamented with wooden carvings. With that event a new era in the history of circus bandwagons was begun.

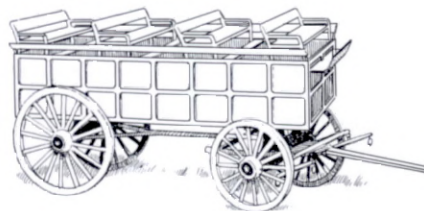


Fig. 7 Bandwagon shown on 1835 handbill of Macomber, Welch & Co., from Flint collection. It is described as "a large and capacious carriage, drawn by four grey horses."

Footnotes:

- 1 Antony D. Hippisley Coxe, *A Seat at the Circus* (London, 1951, p 36.
- 2 Digest, *Joseph Blackburn's Diary*, White Tops, November-December, 1955, p 5.
- 3 Alan S. Downer, ed., *The Memoir of John Durang* (Pittsburgh, 1966) p 102.
- 4 Laszlo Tarr, *The History of the Carriage* (New York, 1969).
- 5 *Pittsfield (Mass.) Sun*, April 16, 1835.
- 6 *Detroit Free Press*, May 30, 1887.

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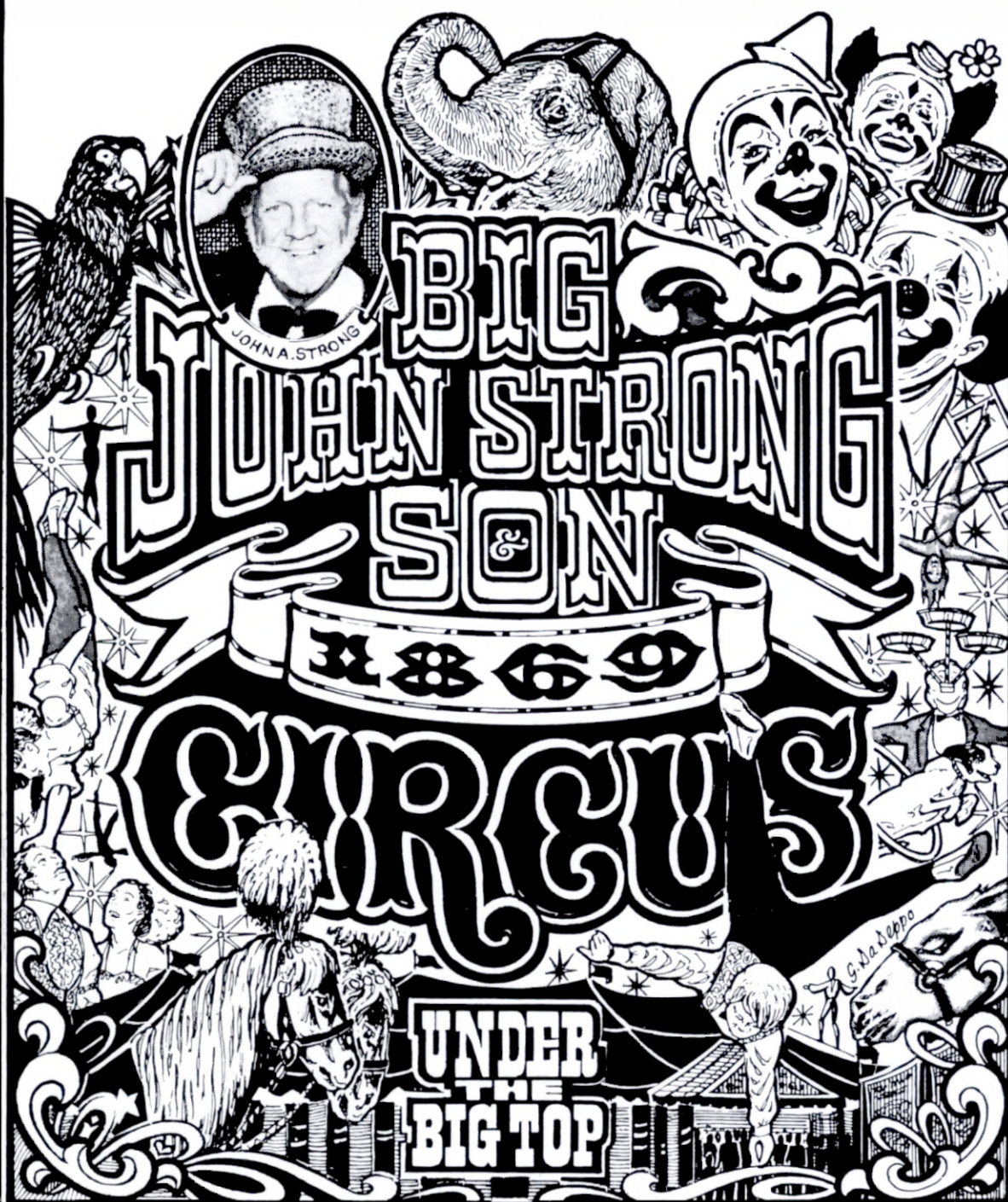
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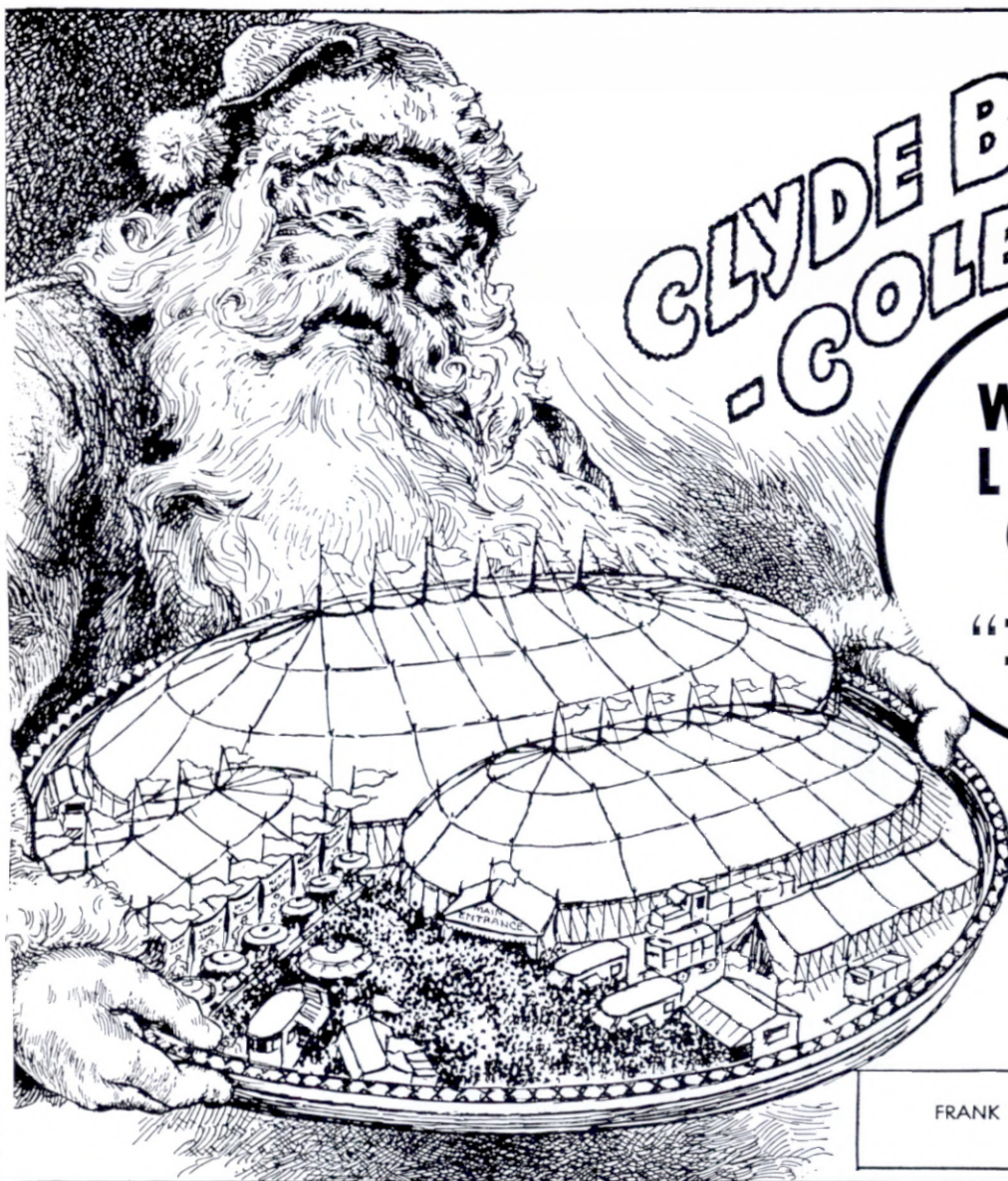
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Season's Greetings From Our Family To Yours

THE ORIGIN OF THE CIRCUS PARADE WAGON

by George Speaight

(Note: This article was delivered as a paper at the Conference of The American Society for Theatre Research on the theme of American Popular Entertainment, held at Lincoln Center, New York in November, 1977)

The circus parade was brought to a pitch of magnificence in America that eclipsed anything achieved elsewhere, providing perhaps the finest free spectacle since the triumphal processions of imperial Rome. These parades originated in the 1830's with the circus band driving round the town in a simple band wagon to announce the arrival of the circus in the locality, but in the next decade the parades started to grow more impressive and the wagons became vastly more elaborate. It is the purpose of this article to note the beginnings of this development, and to trace the source from which they sprang.

In 1846 the menagerie of Van Amburgh introduced into its parade a superb vehicle named the Tuba Rhoda and described as a Grecian State Carriage or a Roman Triumphal Car. There is a print of it, published by Currier and Ives in that year, depicting it passing Astor House, New York (Fig. 1).

Its carriage was somewhat like that

Fig. 1 - Print by Currier & Ives of Van Amburgh's Parade Wagon, 1846. Circus World Museum, Baraboo, Wisconsin.



of a pram in shape, and it was marked by certain distinguishing features. An umbrella-like canopy surmounts the high seat of honour; the driver sits at the front between two carved lions, and there is another at the back; the wheels are provided with massive decorated spokes and the side of the carriage is embellished with a painted cartouche and a shield; the whole is decorated with deeply carved animal figures. Nothing like this had been seen in America before. Where did the idea come from?

To answer this question we must investigate Isaac Van Amburgh's career. It is known that the cage boy in June, Titus and Angevine's menagerie had to take over the showing of the big cats after an accident to the trainer in 1833. He made a success of it and caused a sensation. There is a story that his fame went to his head, and that he began to acquire ideas above his station, paying court to his boss's daughter. To get him out of the way Titus sent him to London in 1838.

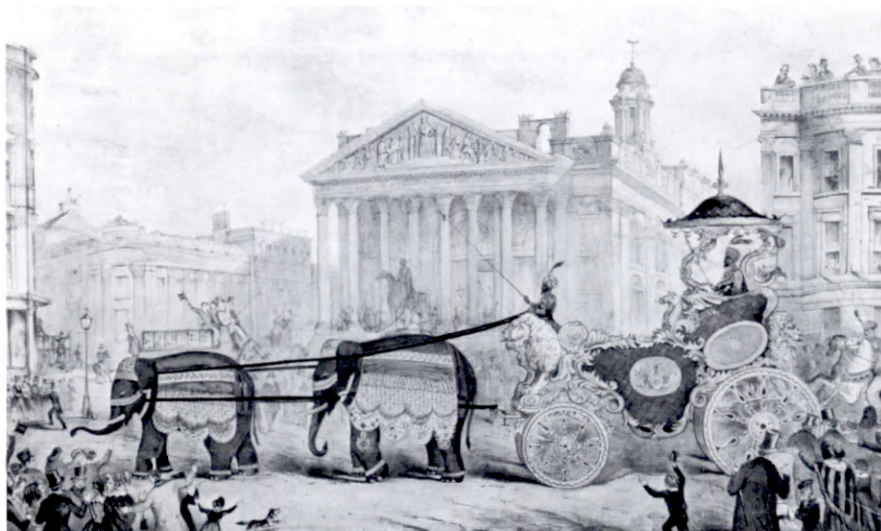
In England he achieved an equal success, and in 1843 he teamed up with the American proprietor, Richard Sands, who had brought his circus to England the year before. Together they put on a show at the Lyceum in London, and then toured a combined menagerie and circus for a year or so before splitting up. Van Amburgh was back in America by 1845 and Sands had returned by the next year.

Sands brought the first tented circus to England and Van Amburgh the first scientific and artistic display of wild animal training. But did they see anything that was new to them while they were there? Well, the most striking circus development of the 'forties was the touring of Hughes's Mammoth Equestrian Establishment. Edwin Hughes was the son of a steel toy manufacturer in Birmingham who joined Batty's Circus and became the best polander in England, the first, it was said, to succeed in rotating 360 degrees on his head without holding, probably while balancing on the single upright spar of a come-apart ladder. He became Batty's manager in Ireland and then at the age of thirty formed his own company in 1843. After only five seasons he retired in 1847 with a handsome fortune.

The chief feature of Hughes's Circus was its impressive parade of fifty horses and richly-carved carriages, some in the "gorgeous style of Louis Quatorze," but the most striking feature of the parades was a couple of superb vehicles pulled by elephants and camels. Hughes was said to be the

Fig. 2 - Poster for Hughes's Circus in England, c. 1845. The British Library.





first man to succeed in harnessing these animals.

Firstly, there was a vehicle described as the Rath, or Burmese Imperial Carriage and Throne, which was introduced in 1845. A print shows it entering Gloucester in that year. Its length was 13 ft., 6 ins. and its height to the summit of the Peasath or Royal Canopy was 15 ft. It was pulled by two elephants, whose caparisons were of crimson velvet embroidered with gold. The driver was an East Indian in appropriate costume, and the proprietor of the establishment, similarly attired, occupied the car like an oriental potentate.

There is a poster of Hughes's show at about this date (Fig. 2), which incidentally gives a good pictorial impression of the acts to be seen on the show, and there is a fine view of the Rath (Fig. 3) as it passed the Exchange in London in 1847 on its way to a season at the

Fig. 3 - Hughes's Burmese Imperial Carriage passing the Guildhall, London, 1847. The Guildhall Library.

Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, where the company presented a Grand Oriental Spectacle entitled *The Desert, or the Imaun's Daughter*.

I would draw your attention to the following features: the pram-like carriage shape; the umbrella-like canopy over the high seat of honor; the driver sitting between two lions, with another at the back; the massive, decorated spokes; the cartouche and shield on the side; and the deeply carved animal figures.

The similarities with Van Am-

Fig. 4 - Hughes's Egyptian Dragon Chariot, followed by the Burmese Imperial Carriage, in parade at Cambridge, England, 1847. The Illustrated London News.



burgh's vehicle are too striking to be accidental. Let me remind you of the dates. Hughes had introduced this carriage by May 1845; Van Amburgh was back in New York by December 1845; Van Amburgh had introduced his Tuba Rhoda by April 1847. It was not the same vehicle, for Hughes was still parading it in 1847, but it was a close copy. Whether made in England or America we do not know, but I think it likely that Van Amburgh commissioned a duplicate from Hughes's carriage builder.

Meanwhile, Hughes was extending his fleet of carriages. Let us look again at his 1845 bill (Fig. 2). At the bottom you can see the bandwagon he was then using, which was, I am told, of the same type as was used by American circuses at that time. But in 1847 Hughes came up with something altogether more magnificent. This was what he described as the Egyptian Dragon Chariot or perambulating Temple of Isis and Osiris, drawn by four camels (Fig. 4). The print shows the onion-domed roof supported on four pillars, and the carved dragons on either side of the band. The Rath follows behind it.

This was Hughes's last campaigning season, but it was not the end of the Dragon bandwagon. In 1847 Richard Sands, back in the United States, was parading with a serpent band car, but in 1848 he was describing his bandwagon as the Sacred Egyptian Chariot of Isus and Osiris - Hughes's very words. A poster shows what it looked like in 1849 (Fig. 5). I take it that the engraver misunderstood the artist's drawing or just forgot to put in the four uprights supporting the onion dome; but the dome is there all right, curiously floating in the air, and so are the carved dragons on either side of the band. This is either a copy of Hughes's Dragon Chariot or the same vehicle. Once again the dates fit; the last recorded appearance of Hughes's Dragon Chariot in England was September 23, 1847. The next year what seems to be the same vehicle was in the United States.

In 1849 Sands was not only parading this Dragon Chariot but also an East Indian Car pulled by three elephants. So Sands now had both of the parade vehicles that Hughes had originated. Whether they were the originals or copies or whether Sands bought Van Amburgh's copy of the elephant chariot, we don't know. My guess is that Sands bought the originals, as we hear no more of Hughes's parade wagons in England after 1847. Here is a little problem that circus historians may manage to solve sometime. But the line of descent of the Van Amburgh elephant chariot and the Sands Dragon bandwagon from Hughes's Mammoth Equestrian Establishment is clear.

From that point in time the style of carved and gilded parade wagons

began to spread throughout the United States. In 1847 the American carriage builder, John Stephenson, had built two bandwagons for Raymond and Waring. He called them the Chrysarma or Golden Chariot. One of them appears in a print of 1848 as pulled by a team of horses driven in hand - I can count eighteen and there are probably some more round the corner. I believe the first forty-horse hitch was introduced the next year.

In this same year, 1848, Welch, Delavan and Nathan were parading with an Imperial Persian Chariot, made after the style of the Imperial Chariots of Cyrus the Great, decorated with eagles and horses in gold and silver; and Howes and Co. were parading with their own monster Dragon Chariot, which was drawn by twelve camels of the Syrian breed, imported from the deserts of Arabia, when Crane took the show over the next year. Sumptuously carved parade wagons had now become a feature of the American Circus. A proud chapter lay ahead. But that is another story.

Let us now return to the figure of Edwin Hughes in England, with whom it all began. Do we know who designed his parade carriages? Yes, it was none other than W.F. Walleth, the Shakespearean clown, who once teamed up with Dan Rice in America. In his autobiography Walleth describes how he was engaged by Van Amburgh in England at a handsome salary, and continues as follows: "I next joined Mr. Edwin Hughes, of the Mammoth Circus, in which I was principally engaged as an artist. I then designed the first and best of all the ornamental carriages that ever travelled with circus tents. The great lion carriage drawn by elephants was my production. The enormous pictorial carriages, with rich carvings and gilding, were my original designs. The noble colossal carriage called the 'Egyptian Dragon Chariot', which cost 750 pounds in building, and was drawn by camels, and the harness and all the trappings, were also made from my patterns. This carriage was built by Messrs. Holmes, of Derby, coach builders to her Majesty, from my sections and elevations, and under my personal superintendence. Thus I became the humble means of building for the proprietor a colossal fortune." Despite this fortune, Walleth complained that he was poorly rewarded for his work; Hughes presented him with a new suit of clothes to show his appreciation, but Walleth found that he had to pay the bill for them himself.

We now think of Walleth only as a clown, but his early experience had been as a stage scenery painter; he also painted dioramas for peepshows, and once made a large dragon with tremendous jaws, claws and wings, that was worked by a strong man inside it. Moreover, he had studied the techni-



Fig. 5 - Sand's Sacred Dragon Chariot as illustrated on a poster, 1848. Author's collection.

que of marionettes when Maffey's famous Theatre du Petit Lazary had played at the Theatre Royal in Hull in 1828, and later he carved several sets of marionette figures, as he says, "in splendid array and the very perfection of mechanism." He was clearly a versatile, self-taught artist.

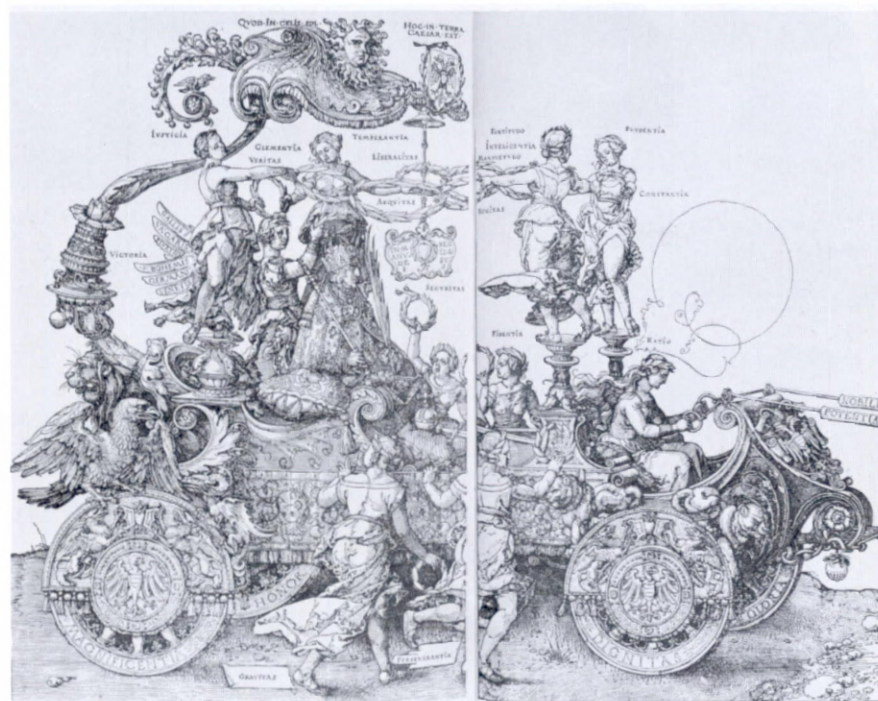
But where did he obtain the inspiration for the fantastic carriages he designed for Hughes? Some of it may have come from the fanciful decor of the puppet theatre, but the ultimate source was the triumphal cars of renaissance monarchs (Fig. 6). There is a woodcut by Albrecht Durer of a triumphal chariot for the Emperor Maximilian I, made in 1522 and incidentally one of the largest wood engravings ever cut - the original is seven and a half feet in length. Note the umbrella-like canopy over the seat of honor; the driver at the front of the

vehicle; the massive decorated spokes; and the deeply-carved animal figures on the body of the carriage. We have seen all these before.

In this reconstruction of an episode in the history of the Circus on two continents I must express my thanks to two Americans who have given me much assistance over the American side of the story: Mr. John F. Polacsek, who kindly provided me with a copy of his thesis on the Development of the Circus and Menagerie 1825-1860, submitted to the Graduate School of Bowling Green University; and Mr. Stuart Thayer, President of the Circus Historical Society, who has shared his great knowledge with me with much generosity.

Together I hope that we have answered the question: What was the origin of the American circus parade wagon? It was introduced by Van Amburgh and Sands; copied or imported from Hughes in England; designed by Walleth, the Shakespearean clown; influenced by the decor of peepshows and puppet theatres; inspired by the triumphal cars of renaissance emperors.

Fig. 6 - The Emperor Maximilian's Triumphal Chariot. Woodcut by Albrecht Durer, 1522.



THE FLOYD AND HOWARD KING RAILROAD CIRCUSES 1925-30

PHOTO SUPPLEMENT

by Joseph T. Bradbury

Periodically, during the run of the above mentioned article supplements will appear. These will contain additional information that may have come in after a particular installment has been run, also any corrections of information previously printed will be made, but most of all any "new" photographs or other illustrative

material that might turn up will be printed. It is our desire to use as many photos etc. of King owned railroad shows as possible. Unfortunately, there are not very many known photos of the King rail shows of this period, hence we invite our readers who

may have additional photographs in their collections and would like to share them with others by having them printed in these supplements please contact either the editor or author on what you have. Thanks to CHS members Howard Tibbals and Warren H. Wood we have a number of "new" photos to run

Photo No. 1 - This is the only photo to turn up of the Sea Serpent tableau on the Walter L. Main Shows in 1925. The Main title has been painted on the skyboard but note that the large carved "S" which was for Sparks, the circus on which the wagon was on before coming to Walter L. Main in 1925, is still intact. In 1926 when the wagon

was transferred to the King owned Gentry Bros. Circus the "S" was replaced by a "G". Although the wagon would later be on both the King owned Walter L. Main and Cole Bros. circuses the "G" would remain, but the title of the particular show would be painted on the skyboard. Warren H. Wood Collection.

Photo No. 2 - Closeup view of the Large Oval Tableau (Ringling No. 4) on the Walter L. Main Shows in 1925. The paint-

ing inside the oval is a Roman Chariot Racing scene. Warren H. Wood Collection.

Photo No. 3 - This dog wagon was probably on one of the King owned rail shows but identification is not complete. It was labeled on the back "Walter L. Main Circus" but it is possible it might have been the Andrew Downie owned show, 1918-24. There are no other known photos of a dog wagon on King's Walter L. Main, nor any real evidence a dog wagon was carried, however the large number of canine acts used some seasons lend to reason one would have been necessary. Warren H. Wood Collection.

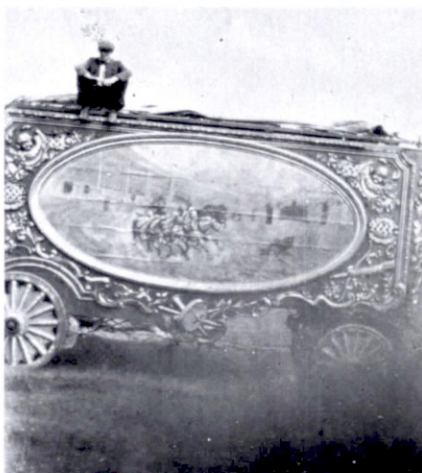


Photo No. 4 - Baggage stock on Walter L. Main lot, July 27, 1925. Big top is in background. According to the season's route the show was playing Richford, Vt. that day. Howard Tibbals Collection.





Photo No. 5 - Walter L. Main big show band inside the big top with steel arena in background, season of 1925. Band director, John Griffin is standing at right behind the snare drum. Howard Tibbals Collection.

Photo No. 6 - Exact date and show this photo was taken is not definitely known

but was probably Walter L. Main in 1925, but possibly Harris Bros. a year earlier. The King owned rail shows in addition to having one large, conventional type, sideshow would also carry one or two smaller pit type shows, such as this one with "Cozan, Down in the Pit of Death, How Can She Live". Howard Tibbals Collection.



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THE JOURNAL OF THE CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY Vol. 21, No. 6 November-December 1977

Fred D. Pfening, Jr., Editor

Joseph T. Bradbury, Fred D. Pfening, III Associate Editors

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This Month's Cover

The Walter L. Main lithograph on the cover of this issue was used during the 1899 season. The poster was designed and printed by the Courier Litho Company of Buffalo, N.Y.

Our reproduction is from a photo of the original that is in the collection of the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Election Results Delayed

Due to some late acceptances the results of the CHS election will not be available in time for publication in this issue. Election commissioner Charles Amidon will announce the results in the January-February 1978 issue.

New Members

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690 San Luis Rd.
Berkeley, Calif. 94707

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Ronald R. Hurst #2368
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William J. Dailey #2374
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Tom O. Inabinette #661 (Reinstated)
1706 Division
Greenville, Texas 75401

Jack D. Hunter, III #1689 (Reinstated)
49 Jameswood Ave.
Savannah, Georgia 31406

An Explanation

Due to a mixup in the typesetting the article on Walter L. Main and Gentry Bros. Circuses, season of 1926, that appeared in the September-October 1977 issue, was printed out of order. The complete article was printed, but not in the proper sequence.

Our apologies to the author Joseph T. Bradbury for such an unprofessional error.

Back Issues on Cole Bros. Circus

In the mid and late 1960's Joe Bradbury wrote a series of articles on Cole Bros. Circus covering the seasons from 1935 to 1940. A number of the issues containing the Cole articles are still available. The cost per issue is \$1.65, with 75¢ postage per order. The issues and articles are as follows:

Part 5 Cole 1936 season, Jan. Feb. 1966;
Part 6 Cole 1937 season, May June 1966;
Part 9 Cole-Robbins preparation 1938, Sept. Oct. 1966; Part 10 Robbins Bros. 1938, Nov. Dec. 1966; Part 11 Cole 1938, March April 1967; Part 12 Cole 1939, May June 1967; Supplement to Cole July Aug. 1967 and Part 13 Cole 1940, Sept. Oct. 1967. Send orders to Bandwagon Back Issues, 2515 Dorset Rd., Columbus, Ohio 43221.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As you know, we have elected a new president of the Circus Historical Society and my term will end on January 1. I want to thank each and every member for electing me to this position in 1973 and again in 1975. While the duties of the office are not onerous, it is still an honor to be so chosen and I have enjoyed it.

Because we had no national convention in 1976 I presided at only three - in 1974 in Bridgeport, 1975 in Baraboo and this year in Sarasota. At all of these I enjoyed meeting the members and hearing their comments regarding the Society. I urge the members to use the *Bandwagon* at every opportunity for comments concerning the operation of the CHS.

During my terms of office Tom Parkinson served as vice-president, Julian Jimenez and Edward L. Jones as Secretary-Treasurer and, of course, Fred Pfening as editor of *Bandwagon*. I wish to express my appreciation to them for their efforts on behalf of the Society.

The members of the Board of Directors should also be mentioned for their supportive action in those cases where their advice was requested.

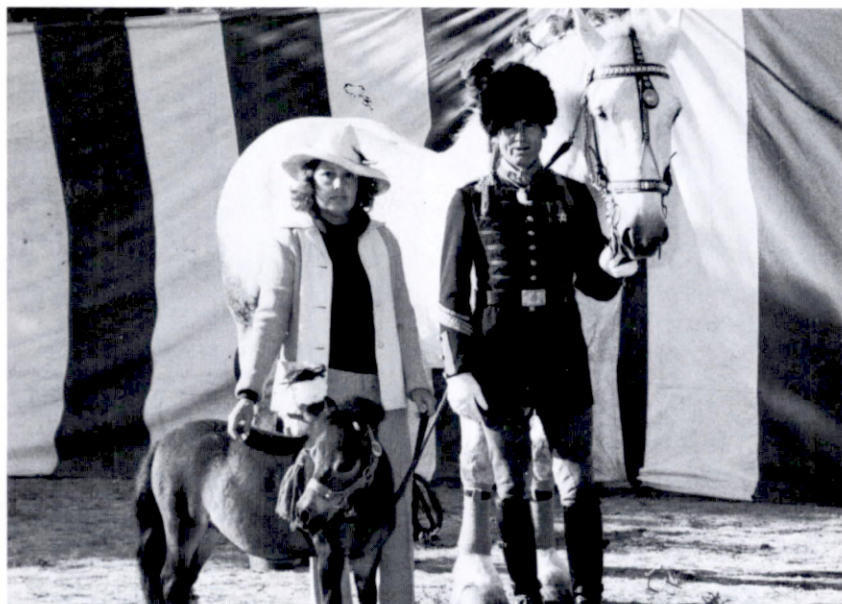
If you will recall, in early 1974 it was decided to urge the Gulf Oil Company by our personal letters to act positively in their decision as to whether or not to buy Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey. In the event, they did not, but the response of the membership (many of whom sent me copies of their letters) to this program was very gratifying.

Again, in 1976 our membership had fallen in numbers and our printing costs had risen to the point where our publishing was endangered. In response to my appeal the members found new members in such numbers to save the situation. While we are not yet free of the bogey of rising costs we seem to be solvent for the immediate future.

In this past year Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey has mentioned our organization in their program and apparently my address is listed as the place for interested persons to write. As a rough guess, through September I have had 30 inquiries, several of whom have become members. We are grateful to Mr. Feld and his organization for this publicity.

I might note in passing that I also have received requests for Gebel-Williams' photograph, a list of all circuses ever performing in the US, geneological information on obscure performers and a "good deal" on 500 comic books.

I realize that it is not possible to have an effect on the amount of research and writing of circus history by asking for it. Those persons who are interested in doing so will produce it. However, since our only real function is the publishing of *Bandwagon*, I would again like to urge members to devote themselves to whatever way they can to the finding and chronicling of the history of this institution we all find so fascinating. Stuart Thayer



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